MITHILĀ and MAGADHA
700 A.D. - 1100 A.D.

A Thesis submitted to the University of London
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Laksman Jha

School of Oriental and African Studies

PREFACE

Since 1780 A.D. when for the first time an old inscription was discovered at Munger, much material has been gathered for a history of the land. Remains of ancient buildings, coins, pottery, inscriptions, sculpture, manuscripts, accounts of foreign travellers etc. have been discovered and published. But though text-books on Indian history for schools and colleges have taken into account the results of these discoveries, there has been very little effort so far to take up a territorial and cultural unit and build up a picture of its people in a certain period of its history. There are some works which apparently fulfil this requirement. But their treatment of the subject is explorative rather than interpretative, compartmental rather than comprehensive. In the following pages an attempt has beenmade to bring together the results of archaeological (inscriptional, sculptural and architectural) and literary (including philosophical) researches and, on that co-ordination, to base a picture of the society in Mithilā and Magadha in 700 A.D. - 1100 A.D.

It would be useless on my part to pretend that the work is entirely original, though I do believe that some new light has been thrown on the state of affairs in Mithilā and Magadha during the five centuries

that followed the death of Harṣavardhana in 648 A.D. With regard to the quality of my contributions to the historical knowledge of the time and place that form the subject-matter of the following inquiry, I can only say that on the material available to me, I could have produced no better work.

Professor K. de B. Codrington has been to me no mere supervisor. His kindness and sympathies have made my studies here for the last two years not only fruitful, but also very enjoyable. I am also grateful to Mr. H.G. Rawlinson (late of the Indian Educational Service) and Mr. W.G. Archer (late of the Indian Civil Service, now Keeper of the India Section, Victoria and Albert Museum) for their interest in my work and very valuable suggestions for improvement.

Laksman Jha

School of Oriental and African Studies
University of London, W.C.1.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Plates

ABBREVIATIONS

AHI - An Advanced History of India
by R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Raychaudhuri
and Kalikinkar Datta. London. 1948.

AP - Agnipurānam
edited by Rajendralal Mitra, Calcutta. 1873.

BI - The Buddhist Iconography. London. 1924.

EI - Epigraphia Indica

EISMS - Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture
by R.D. Banerjea. Delhi. 1933.

HB - History of Bengal. Vol. I. Dacca. 1943.

IA - Indian Antiquary

MA - Mīmāṁsānukramaṇikā of Maṇḍanamiśra
Benares. 1928.

SDV - Śaṅkaradigvijayah of Vidyāraṇya
Poona. 1916.

SM - Sādhanamālā. Baroda, Vol. I 1925, Vol. II 1928.

SV - Śaṅkaravijayah of Ānandagiri.
Calcutta. 1868.

VD - Viṣṇudharmottara by Stella Kramrisch
Calcutta. 1928.

MITHILĀ and MAGADHA
700 A.D. - 1100 A.D.

CHAPTER I
THE LAND

Landscape 1200 years ago

Twelve hundred years ago, where begins our inquiry into the conditions of life of the people living in the land[1] bounded on the north by the Himālaya in Nepāla, on the south by the Chotānagpur and Rājmahal hills (the eastern spurs of the Vindhya range), on the west by the rivers Gaṇḍaka and Karmanāśā and on the east by the river Kośī, the landscape there was not much different from what it is today. A little over a thousand years is a period not long enough to bring in any considerable change in the structure of the earth or even in its surface. Minor changes, however, do occur brought about by earthquakes (e.g. the Bihar earthquake of 1934) and changes in the river-courses, the most notorious example of the latter being the Kośī. We shall not go deep into the geological aspects of the land. We treat it here only as a background for human activity and shall therefore take into account only those aspects that have a bearing on the social behaviour.

'Mithilā' and 'Magadha'

The terms 'Mithilā' and 'Magadha' are no longer in use in administration. In common parlance, however, they do signify the two cultural zones north and south

---

(1) Latitudes 25 N - 27 N
Longitudes 84 E - 87 E (from Greenwich)

of the Gaṅgā. The languages spoken in the two zones are named after them - 'Maithilī' derived from 'Mithilā', and Magahī (Sans. Māgadhī) derived from 'Magadha'.

Four physical belts

This whole area may be divided into four belts according to the physical features. In the north is the Himālaya with its foot-hills and terrai sloping down southward into the plains stretching up to the Gaṅgā. Another plain-belt, narrower than the one in the north, starts on the southern bank of the Gaṅgā and rises up into the Chotānagpur hills which form the fourth and last belt. These four belts have been the homes of four distinct cultures since the earliest days of Indian history.

The Himālaya is important for it is the birthplace of the rivers that flow through the plains into the Gaṅgā, bringing in and spreading water and silt over the fields on whose products depends the life of the people. The cold winds from the north find their insuperable barrier here and the life on the plains south of the Himālaya is warm, pleasant, while to the north in Tibet and China it is cold and difficult. It is the Himālaya again which returns to the plains the rain-bearing monsoons from the southern seas.

Individuals as groups have found their last refuge in the Himālaya, and but for it we would have no trace left of Buddhism within the frontiers of India. When in the closing years of the twelfth century A.D. Buddhism was hard pressed between invaders from the

west and the Brāhmans, who dominated the land itself, it was the Himālaya (in Nepal) that provided shelter for the few monks that managed to escape the ensuing carnage. Crossing the Gaṅgā they fled northward through Mithilā, always a strong-hold of Brāhmanism. They took with them many manuscripts full of painted illustrations, prepared at the celebrated University of Nālanda. At the beginning of Indian history, it is clear that the foothills of the Himālaya were occupied by small states of various kinds, little kingdoms and petty tribal principalities. The traditions of Buddhism deal with these small political entities. Under the Mauryas, the sacred sites of Buddhism flourished. Archaeological remains of ancient times are found near Kāthmandu, at Pātan, and in the terai at Rampurba. Nepal will always be an important centre for the study of Indian Buddhism, and much remains still to be done.

The terrible earthquake of north Bihar (Mithilā) in 1934, resulting in the destruction of thousands of human lives and of properties worth millions of pounds sterling, had its origin in the Himālaya. "By far the largest number of disastrous Indian earthquakes have occurred"[1] here. Thousands of acres of fertile land were turned into arid sand-heaps. Land-levels were greatly disturbed, causing changes in river-beds that meant undreamt of heavy floods taking another terrible toll of lives and properties. And then this home of medicinal herbs, this Himālaya celebrated in legends

---

(1) Wadia, D.N.: GEOLOGY OF INDIA. London. 1919. p.32.

and literature as the abode of plants and roots and fruits with live-giving juice, each year sends out to the people on the plains through its flooding rivers the myriads of disease-germs that spread over the land in a few weeks and thousands are down with malaria, kalazar, hook-worm, typhoid, cholera, pneumonia and numerous other less known but in no way less fatal diseases!

That then provides us with a clue to understanding the mixed feeling of respect and awe with which the more intelligent section of the population regard the Himālaya.

The Mithilā plain

The region between the Himālayan terrai in Nepal and the Gaṅgā in Bihar forms an eastern part of the vast Gangetic plain of northern India. Except the district of Saran and the Hazipur sub-division of Muzaffarhur the whole of north Bihar including the districts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Bhagalpur (north), Munger (north) and Purnea with an area of about 18000 sq. miles falls within the ancient territory of ~~the~~ Mithilā. The poet, Candā Jhā, of the last century defines the boundary of Mithilā as follows:(1) "With the Gaṅgā on the south, the Kośī (Kauśikī) on the east, on the west the Gaṇḍaka (Gaṇḍakī) and on the north the Himālaya, this Mithilā, the home of learning, has the

---

(1) 'Gaṅgā bahathi janika dacchina disi purva kausikīdhārā,
Pacchima bahathi Gandakī uttara Himavat bata vistārā, kamalā
Triyugā Dhemurā Vāgmatī Kṛtasārā, Madhya bahathi Laksmanā prabhṛti se Mithilā vidyāgārā."

rivers Kamalā, Triyugā, Dhemurā, Vāgmatī, Kṛtasārā (?) and Laksmanā (Lakhandei) flowing through its heart." This is the traditional conception of Mithilā. With the passage of time, however, the boundary has changed under the pressure of invasions or on account of changes in the land-surface due to the movement of river-beds. The results of invasion are illustrated in the constantly oscillating boundary-line between Nepāla and Mithilā, while the river Kośī provides an example of the latter process of geographical alteration. The Mongolian peoples of Tibet and China more than once aspired to have domination over India. History, in spite of the dearth of recorded evidence, displays several clear instances of Tibetan and Chinese invasions of Nepāla which was eventually colonised permanently. Mithilā, in the plains below, was also affected through the mountain-passages of both Nepāla and Assam.

The Kośī has been notorious for the changes of its course, oscillating like a pendulum with its head at Chhatragarha, the place where the river descends into the plain from the Himālaya, reaching down to the Gaṅgā, the maximum distance between its eastern and western extremes being, in a direct line nearly a hundred miles. Apart from the terrible devastations and the untold miseries suffered by the six million inhabitants of an area of 3000 sq. miles caused by floods that destroy the crops, wash away houses and cattle and the consequent epidemics that overnight kill thousands, the Kośī has acted as the dividing line between Mithilā in the west and Varendra (north Bengal) in the east, demarcating two zones, inhabited by two distinct racial groups, each with their own traditions and outlooks, that is to say, two distinct cultural patterns.

The Gaṇḍaka, which is the western boundary-line of Mithilā in the literary accounts, is a problem in that there is no one river bearing that name. It is true that both the Sadānīrā or the Śālagrāmī Gaṅgā and the Burhi Gaṇḍaka, the former being the dividing line between the districts of Saran on the one side and Champaran and Muzaffarpur (Hazipur sub-division) on the other, the latter being the boundary between Champaran and Muzaffarpur in its upper courses, have formed the western boundary of Mithilā at one time or other. In the later Vedic age when Janaka, the philosopher-king and Yājñavalkya the monist lived, Mithilā was still the name of only the capital-city, the kingdom being known as Videha, the Sadānīrā (the Śālagrāmī Gaṅgā) was probably its western boundary. Later when the Vṛjis and Lichhavis, tribes of mixed origin, established themselves east of the Sadānīrā in what is today Champaran and Muzaffarpur (Hazipur sub-division), the Burhi (Old) Gaṇḍaka probably came to be the western boundary of Mithilā. There is, however, no recorded evidence so far known in support of this view save that founded on ethnographical and anthropological grounds.

The Vāgmati, rising in the high central Himālaya and flowing through the vale of Nepal whose capital Kathmandu stands on its western bank, reaches the plain where lie the ruins of Simraongarha, the capital of the Karṇāṭa kings, the last of whom, Harasinhadeva, abandoned his fortress capital and his kingdom in the year 1323 A.D. to the invading Pathan army from Delhi

and took refuge in the mid-Himalaya. King Harasinhadeva introduced several social reforms which continue in Mithilā even today and the orthodox Brāhmans there remember him with gratitude. The associations of the Vāgmatī with the court of the Karṇāṭa kings are manifold, many details being preserved of their zeal for protecting Vedic orthodoxy and ritual and of their court-pandits, the Law-givers of Mithilā, whose words hold sway even today on the law-courts there.

The Kamalā rises in the Himālaya in Nepāla and flowing through, ~~in~~ the district of Darbhanga, a centre of Brāhmanic orthodoxy, joins the Vāgmatī, known there as 'Kareha', before the two together fall into the Gaṅgā. There is another Kamalā west of it, which also rises in the Himālaya in Nepal and joins the vāgmatī south of the town of Darbhanga which stands on its left bank. This western Kamalā is more like the softly flowing vāgmati than its eastern namesake, which is a vehicle of devastating floods and a centre of malaria. Curiously enough this Kamalā in its lower half is known as 'Jēbachha' (restorer of life) and thousands of women in Mithilā every year on certain auspicious days specified in the local calendars, bathe in its waters in the hope that the sins they may have committed in their past lives may be washed away by the benevolent river and their children may be fortunate. Hundreds of such children bear 'Jēbachha' as a second name, as a token of their parents' gratitude to the kindly river-goddess the 'healer of the mother's womb'. The course of this Kamalā is as

unsettled as that of the Kośī, though the volume and force of water carried down the streams of the latter far exceeds the Kamalā and consequently the devastations by floods and loss of lives by epidemics are far greater here than those in the Kamalā area.

The Kamalā and the Kośī in spite of the miseries they bring on the helpless people, are looked upon as holy and receive sacrificial offerings; often a goat is sacrificed as the token of one's gratitude to the mighty river-goddesses, especially to the Kamalā, with prayers for the birth and good fortune of a hoped for son. For it is the son that maintains the parents in their old age and it is he again, they believe, whose virtuous deeds will secure a place for them in paradise after their death. 'In the midst of calamity, it is a boon to be spared a misery'; runs a well known saying in northern India. Of late, however, a change is noticable in the attitude of the people. People now accept a new belief that these terrible rivers can be made to serve mankind if only they can be controlled and their valleys brought under the plough. A few years ago it would have been considered as sacrilegious to refer to the Kośī or the Kamalā as an 'evil', for the goddess would be angry and would visit the people with her water. The outstanding feature of the history of India is the steady increase in her population. The dearth of cultivable land is the origin of many of the wars, great or small, history tells of.

The rivers Lakhandei in the Muzaffarpur district, Triyugā and Balān in Darbhanga, Dhemurā in the north Bhagalpur district and a number of minor rivers in Mithilā all rise in the Himālaya and flow southward into one or other of the Burhi Gaṇḍaka, vāgmatī, Kamalā or Kośī which take them to the great Gaṅgā, and so to the sea in the Bay of Bengal.

Flat alluvial soil, watered by seasonal rains and constant rivers, provides the ideal ground for the growth of the crops, without which man cannot live and cultural development is impossible. Rice is the main and summer crops throughout this area; rice is the staple food of the people. Other summer crops are marua (Ragi), which is made into black bread and is the mainstay of the poor people who form the overwhelming majority, maize in the southern and south-eastern parts of the plain, and āsu - a kind of paddy ready for harvesting in two months and hence known as Sāṭhī, the 'sixty-day' crop. Together with maruā, maize and āsu (known by different names in different localities) are the main food-stuffs of the poor people. In winter there is wheat for the 'bābu' and barley, matar, khesari (varieties of beans) for the workers.

Fruits

With the growth of population, more and more land originally covered over with ungle has been brought under the plough and consequently while domestic animals have been on the increase, the wild beasts have receded

into the forests of the Himalayan terrai and into the jungles that still remain on the banks of rivers or on the swamps. Among the domestic animals the cow occupies the foremost place, for while she herself provides milk, an important element in the diet for children and adults, for the normal or diseased all alike, bullocks draw the farmer's plough in the field and his carts to the market. While alive they are not only looked after but worshipped, and no one can touch their flesh except the Caṇḍālas. For centuries the Aryan law-givers have laid down the severest punishments for killing a cow or eating beef. The followers of these Vedic law-givers still adhere to the laws and to the letter. In the beginning of Indo-Aryan civilization, the cow was no better or wrose than the goats who were brought to the table even less frequently than the cow and her off-spring. Actually, the Vedas do refer to the practice of beef-eating. And even in the days of Bhavabhūti in the seventh century A.D. a reference to such practices in the drama was not shocking to an Indian audience.(1) The necessities of farming have removed the flesh of the cow from her keeper's table. And his complete ignorance of his own history has made him fanatical about her.

The leaders of society in Mithilā, having since late Vedic days when this part of the Gangetic plain was colonised, been Brahmans, have always been prejudiced against the buffalo, because Viśvāmitra,

---

(1) Bhavabhūti: Uttararāmacaritam. Act. IV.

the leader of the rival Kṣatriyas, first made the buffalo, thus goes the story in the Purāṇas, available to his people in the absence of the cow, which remained with Vaśiṣṭha, his Brāhman opponent. People, however, especially those belonging to the working class, have ignored these Purānic prejudices and have taken more and more to keeping buffaloes. They provide a larger quantity of milk for the same amount of care bestowed on cows. The he-buffaloes being of no use in the plough for which the bullocks are sufficient, are sold to cattle-traders, who take them to the 'east' where they find a ready market. Goats are reared by the people of the working class, but the meat is shared by all except the vegetarians of different castes. The orthodox Brāhman does not eat meat, however, unless it be of a goat duly sacrificed on the altar of the goddess Durgā, Kālī or Tārā. Animals of the female sex are never sacrificed to the goddess.

Horses are used by well-to-do people for riding, as well as drawing carriages, and by the poor baniā (shop-keeper) for carrying his goods from his home to the market, from the railway station to his home and from one market to another. Mithilā not being perhaps an ideal place for horses, well-bred horses have to be imported either from the western provinces or from Tibet and Nepal, the Tibetan breed being known as 'bhotia' ('Bhota' - Tibet). The bhotia horse is small, but well-built and strong,

and is more serviceable than the elegant-looking ones from the west, which cost far more than the bhotia, require far more care than the latter which renders them suited more for the luxury-stables of aristocrats than for the bania or for average farmer.

The average Indian village is still a very much isolated unit of society. Villages are linked with the market-towns by fair-weather roads; made roads usable all the year round link the market-towns, but transport is still a problem. In ancient India this rural isolation must have been even greater. It was the major factor in the life of the people in spite of the invasions and dynastic wars of which history tells.

Elephants used to be kept by almost every aristocrat until ten or fifteen years ago. But the increasing use of motor-cars where good roads are available is driving this huge beast out of use. It is still jungle-bred and is domesticated after it is caught in the jungles of Assam hills by professionals in the trade.

Small jungles still survive in the plains and provide cover for tigers and panthers which come in from the jungles in the Himalayan terrai and cause considerable anxiety among the people and occasionally loss of human lives, too. Deer are found in abundance in the jungles of the Kośī swamps. Wild boar, nīlgai

and wolves along with numerous other animals are found in any jungle area, big or small. The rivers harbour the dangerous crocodile, as well as edible fish of various kinds.

Among birds, the edible kinds still survive which are enumerated by Aśoka in his pillar edict,(1) which prohibited their further destruction by man. These are the aruṇa (lal sar), dhavala (dhaul), and nakaṭā pigeon. Other varieties of birds include the crow, the crane, the vulture, the cuckoo.

Mithilā is noted for its fruits, mangos, lichis, bananas, katahals (Jack-fruit), plums and guavas. Huge mango groves with their tall, dark evergreen trees laden with fruit for a quarter of the year are a feature of the landscape.

The Gaṅgā(2)

The Ganges, the holiest of holy rivers, not only in Bihar but in the whole of India, flows through Bihar for over 200 miles, west to east. Since the beginning of recorded history in the days of the later Vedic literature, the Brāhmaṇas, especially the 'Satapathabrāhmaṇam' and the Upaniṣads including the 'Bṛhdāraṇyakopaniṣad' which forms the final six chapters of the 'Satapathabrāhmaṇam' (c. 1000 B.C.)

---

(1) Hultzsch, E. CIT. Vol. I Inscriptions of Asoka (Pillar edicts)

(2) Buchanan, Francis: An Account of the Districts of Bihar and Patna in 1811-12.

this river has acted as the dividing line between two peoples, the Aryans in the north and the non-Aryans of mixed descent in the south. These peoples are distinguished by two outlooks on life, and have altogether distinct cultures. The Aryans were originally intruders into the Mithilā plain and had to establish themselves there after having driven away the non-Aryans into the hills and jungles to the south of the Gaṅgā and having made those that remained there into slaves, including them in the fourth caste, the Śūdras, the caste of the conquered. They were masters in the north, but the non-Aryan peoples, who fled to the south and established themselves there, did not leave them in peace. In between was the Ganges, a mighty barrier against any effective invasion of the south from the north. It was only later that the Aryans from the western provinces invaded this southern region and subjugated the people, reducing them to the low status of their kinsmen who had remained behind in Mithilā. Here the two cultures eventually intermingled, though much of the old non-Aryan culture still survives.

Magadha

Magadha proper includes the districts of Patna, Gaya and Munger (south); but under the Pālas, Bhojpur (modern district of Shahabad) in the west and Aṅga or Champā (Bhagalpur south) in the east came to form parts of it. The whole area would be a little over 15,000 sq. miles. The landscape is different from that of Mithilā. We no longer find here the flat, cultivated land-surface, the light grey soil of

Mithilā with the Himālaya in the distance standing out like a giant wall on the horizon. As we proceed southward from the bank of the Gaṅgā, we mark the gradual rise of land to the plateau of Jhārakhaṇḍa; hills both detahced and in ranges are features of the landscape, eventually uniting in a single, stoney plateau. The soil in the valleys is dark brown, bearing crops and vegetation in many ways different from those of Mithilā; in place of the long, wide rivers of the north, we find deep, winding rivulets, often losing themselves in gorges before they join the great Ganges, the meeting ground of the waters from the north as well as from the south.

In ancient days, these southern hills mostly formed of basalt, especially in the district of Gaya, provided secluded homes for the Buddhist monks. Their monasteries, big and small, are found everywhere. Basalt is a good material for sculpture. The basalt of her hills enabled Magadha to develop a distinct school of plastic art that fulfilled the spiritual needs of the people not only in Magadha, but across the Gaṅgā in Mithilā and in the territories beyond the eastern and western boundaries of Mithilā and Magadha where good stone is rare. The hills, however, support a sparse vegetation. Food-crops are rice and maize in summer, wheat and varieties of beans in winter. The cultivated fields lie on the terraces between the hills, water being supplied by the rivers where they exist, though many fields are

dependent on the rains which fall during the monsoons. The history of Mithilā is associated with her rivers, but the history of Magadha originates in her hills. Her cities, Rājagṛha, Nālandā, Vikramaśilā, Buddhagayā, Gayā, were all centres of intellectual and spiritual efforts, of political activity, the scenes of the rise of a great people, and of their eventual decline. The great centres of culture in Magadha stand out in distinct opposition to the isolated small villages of Mithilā to the north.

There are many rivers, though importance attaches to a few only. The Karmanāśā in the west deserves consideration not because of its magnitude as a natural phenomenon, but because of the part it played in the conflicts of the races and cultures of the Aryans in the north-west and the non-Aryans to the south-east. Rising in the Vindhyas in the south it falls into the Gaṅgā. Its name 'Karmanāśā' ('the destroyer of good deeds') is significant. When the Aryans failed to penetrate into the land of the non-Aryan across the barrier formed by this river, they cursed her and declared her utterly impure, so much so that anyone of the 'chosen' race touching the water of this river would lose the benefit of all good deeds he or she may have done in life, and consequently the door of the heaven would be closed against him or her after the span of life here is over. Many are the stories in the Purāṇas woven round this ancient tradition, the best known of them being the Purānic

story of the poor king Tṛsaṅkuś, his patron the valiant Kṣatriya Viśvāmitra and Vaśiṣṭha, the austere Brāhman rival of Viśvāmitra.

The Śona is unique. For one thing, it is the one great river in India having the masculine gender. It is difficult to get at any explanation of the fact that the Brāhmans ~~not only~~ exalted this river by giving it a masculine name. Moreover, the name is often followed by the epithet 'bhadra' (the good) as a part of the compound 'Sonabhadra' (Śona, the good). Even when compounded with 'Gaṅgā', 'Śona' retains its masculine gender and it is 'Gaṅgā' that loses her feminimity, and we have the compound as 'Gaṅgāśonau' (the Gaṅgā and the Śona).(1) This dual honour - the masculine name and the permanent epithet 'bhadra' the good - given by the Brāhmans to a river flowing through the land of their enemies, the non-Aryan, is interesting. The epithet 'bhadra' is no mere eulogy. The Śona has perhaps the purest water of all the rivers in Bihar and the climate of its valley is one of the healthiest in the province. It is the source of the water-supply for a modern network of irrigation canals in the district of Shahabad and Patna. The bulk of the food-crops now grown there is dependent on the river for water. So even today, as in the past, the Śona is a faithful friend of the people, who rightly preserve the ancient epithet 'good'. The Punpun in the district of Patna, the Keul in Munger (south) and

---

(1) Pāṇini: Aṣṭādhyāyī.

and the Jamuniā in Bhagalpur (south) are minor rivers not known outside the localities through which they flow. They have had no influence over the province or on its history. They and a number of others even less important, rise in the hills during the rains, flow torrentially into the Gangā only to dry up during the hot weather.

The Jhārakhanda Hills

On her southern boundary Magadha is bordered by the hill-tracts of Jhārakhaṇḍa, covered with jungles resembling in many ways the terrai of the Himālaya. But having a smaller annual rainfall than the terrai these upland forests do not produce the dense growth of tall sāl trees we come across on the terrai. Nevertheless, the forest is widespread, full of trees that provide varieties of timber for various purposes, especially palās trees, on which the insects that produce lac thrive, a substance whose utility is immense and in whose production this land has so far had the natural monopoly. The area is to a large extent isolated from the rest of the province and plays no part in its history. However, the plateau is noted for its richness in mineral resources. Coal, mica, iron and a large number of other mineral products have made this part of the country within the last few decades the most-valued industrial belt in India.

MITHILĀ and MAGADHA

700 A.D. - 1100 A.D.

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE

The racial structure of Bihar coincides with its physical structure, so that we may consider the people in Mithilā and Magadha as falling into four racial groups, as we proceed southward from the Himālaya: (i) the Aryo-Mongoloid Thārus on the terrai and the northern edge of Mithilā, (ii) the mixed peoples of the Mithilā plain, (iii) the mixed peoples of Magadha, and (iv) the non-Aryans of the southern highlands, the Jhārakhanda hills. There has been far too little research done on the racial composition of the peoples of Bihar and even less work by way of making an effort to make the results of ethnological and anthropological theory known to the people concerned , so that the majority of the population, indeed, of the intelligentsia, still fondly hug the traditional notion of 'pure Aryan blood'. Members of high castes exult in thinking themselves superior to those of lower castes, and these latter to those of still lower castes, and so on *ad infinitum*. Even in the same caste the members of one family group or group of families are at pains to prove they have in their veins 'purer' blood than that of the rest of the local families or groups of families. Long lists of ancestors, going back into far distant ages to some legendary hero, are preserved to prove this

claim to superiority. The families or the groups of families forming a sub-caste, having a distinct name and tradition, but no written genealogy, are no less sure of their descent from a superior origin, as revealed in their oral tradition. Such are the assertions and counter-assertions about superiority of blood, a fiction clung to with an obstinacy that makes it a colossal reality and which, as things are, is bound to continue and sap the vitality of the people as a whole.

The Thārus

The Thārus live along the terrai and the northern strip of Mithilā. They have the mixed blood of the Aryans of the south in Mithilā and of the Mongolians of the north, the Newārs of Nepal for instance. As usual with a people inhabiting a land full of jungles where food-crops are grown with difficulty, they are hardy, courageous, and simple. Still using weapons of early iron-age or even of bronze-age, they are good at hunting. In Mithilā there are current numerous stories about their employment by the zamindars of the towns to kill or drive away wild elephants and tigers and the other wild animals that made it difficult for the people in the neighbourhood of a jungle to clear it and bring the land under the plough. The Thārus undertook such work willingly, and setting up a camp on the skirts of the jungle, would form themselves into bands. As darkness fell, they would light fires and holding blazing wooden-handled straw-torches, with their bows and arrows and khukhris (a small sword) dangling down

the upper pocket of their jackets, they would begin their hunt. Hundreds of such jungles, which had overgrown once well-populated localities, highly developed, materially and culturally, before they were deserted when the Mussalman invaders from the West appeared on the scene, were cleared by the Thārus. When they had finished the job they were sent back by the clever zamindars to their primitive home in the terrai with a day's extra wages to cover their requirements on the way. So the newly cleared land became the zamindar's own holding, his 'zirāt', and those in the neighbourhood who had been looking on it with longing eyes were made serfs of the zamindar, livingfar away, receiving his 'dues' from those tillers through his collector, the 'tahsildār' and his assistants.

The Thāru is not only a good hunter but, in his own way, an industrious farmer. He minds his farm and his cattle with a loving care that deserves prosperity. Indeed, his homestead, like the home of the Santāl in Jhārakhanda, another 'uncivilized' people, is a thing of envy even to the Brāhmans of Mithilā - cottages with low mud-walls with straw thatches, present a model of cleanliness, in circumstances into which modern sanitation has not penetrated. Yet the people remain desperately poor.

The Maithilas

Originally Mithilā was the name of the capital city of the Janakas, named after their ancestor Mithi. Their kingdom was Videha, named after another ancestor

Videha or Videgha. Later Mithilā became synonymous with Videha and the people came to be known as the Maithilas (Mithilāyām bhavah Maithilah - born in Mithilā). While 'Mithilā' has retained its connotation so far, 'Maithila' has undergone a fundamental change in meaning. Because of their dominant position in society the name 'Maithila' came to be applied to the Brāhmans only. This new connotation still persists, together with the revived original meaning. In the discussions that follow, however, we shall use the term in its original sense - those born in Mithilā - and for the class of the priests, shall use 'Brāhman'.

Among the Maithilas the myth of the 'pure blood' has an almost unparalleled hold. Each caste, high or low, believing itself to be descended from a single ancestoral pair, takes every possible care to keep its blood free from any contamination with the blood of another caste. A Brāhman may bear all the visible and invisible but cognisable marks of a Dusādha or Chamāra and yet consider himself a superior being. Rather he would be having just the same attitude towards him as any other member of the caste in which he was born. This is when he is ignorant of his position as determined by anthropology or ethnology. If he be acquainted with the results of these sciences about himself, ten to one he would be desperate to show his 'pure' blood by exhibiting an aggressively contemptuous attitude towards the members of the caste whom he resembles. This mental development can fairly

easily be explained. Social rigidity in India is such that an acceptance of an 'inferior' blood in one's veins entails an inferior position

Much has been written on caste. Some have praised the system which they believe is responsible for the continuity of Indian civilization through the ages against nermous onslaughts from the four quarters of the globe, especially from the west and north-west. There are others who regret it because they say it is morally unjust and socially and politically harmful in as much as it has never allowed the people to feel and work as one undivided group even in face of aggression from beyond the national boundary.

Today the majority of the population in Mithilā are Hindus by religion, the Mussalmāns coming next. Racially, however, there is no difference between the Hindus and the Mussalmāns, the latter being mostly converts from Buddhism or Brāhmanism. And though in principle all Mussalmāns are equal, this equality is even observed at prayer-time in the mosques, the converts were not converted from their old caste-prejudices. A convert from Brāhmanism would demand the same considerations from fellow converts of lower castes in their new religion as he had received under their old faith. Islam in India has not wiped out the distinctions of caste or race. It has instead adopted a caste-system modelled on the Hindu caste-system which hassubjected it to the same internal dissentions

and consequent weakness of the group as a whole, as the Hindus themselves were brought to. A Sheikh or Pathan claims the same position in modern Mithilā among Mussalmāns, as the Brāhmans claim among the Hindus. So the Momin, the Kunjarā or the Dhuniā, converted Hindu weavers, the fruit-grower or the cotton-dealer came to have the same lower status under Islam as they had suffered from as Hindus.

Today the Brāhmans are no longer mere priests. They do all kinds of work. They possess the best lands. They are ahead in agriculture as in education. Their superiority over them is unquestioned. Actually they have made compromises on all fronts - food, sex, politics, the law of inheritance - and yet they will never admit change.

It is difficult to say how far the Rājputs in Mithilā today represent the blood of the Kṣatriyas of old. Most of them came to Bihar during the five centuries that followed the invasions of Mahamud of Ghazni in the first half of the eleventh century A.D. Many of them had fought the Mussalmān invaders in the Punjab and in Rājasthan, the land of the Rājputs beforethey fe1d to the east. The immigration of Rājputs into Mithilā and Magadha continued up to the reign of the last great Mughul, Aurangzeb in the end of the seventeenth century. They were refugees, but their fate in the land of their refuge was the opposite of what refugees meet with today. The Rājput warriors, who migrated to the east, kept their swords, horses and retinues intact, and the people in these parts

being unprepared to meet invaders, they were able to assume the role of conquerors and carved out little kingdoms for themselves. The Pathans had invaded Mithilā and Magadha before the Rajputs came, but their headquarters in Delhi was far away and the means of communications slender. The foreign rulers at Delhi, therefore, were satisfied if these chieftains paid their tribute and did not openly oppose Mussalman rule. The Rājputs were content with what little wealth and glory the new land could offer them. The Brāhmans declared them to be kṣatriyas and, together with whatever of the old kṣatriyas were left there, they formed the caste of the second order, the Rājanya of the Vedas, the Kingly Kṣatriya.

Of all the castes in Mithilā, or Magadha, or in India as a whole, the process of interchange of blood among the Rājputs has been carried on with the least hypocrisy. For their position in society they depended on the power they wielded as the ruling section of the people, rather than on the decisions of Brāhmans who have frequently conferred kṣatriyahood on a new conqueror in order to avoid trouble with the new rulers. The injunctions of the śāstras, the law-books, stood in the way of only a weakling aspiring after recognition as one of the kingly brotherhood. To the strong the śāstras would readily

say 'Rājā eva kṣatriyah'[1] (Verily the King is the kṣatriya). Most of the Rājputs here are zamindārs, the proprietors of the land and as with the Brāhmans or any other caste, their attitude towards others is determined more by their economic position in society, than by their lineage. A big Rājput zamindār is as full of contempt for a poor Rājput farmer, as would be his compeer belonging to the Brāhman or to any other caste.

The Bhumihārs are spread over the districts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga (south), Munger (north and west), Bhagalpur (south-west), Patna and Gaya (east). Physically they are by far the best section of the population in both Mithilā and Magadha. Well-built, tall, sturdy, they are zamindārs or farmers having perhaps the greatest percentage of well-to-do people. They have by their industry made a distinct position for themselves in the society.

The origins of the Bhumihārs have long been a subject of controversy, both popular and academic. They themselves claim to have descended from the Brāhmans of old, who at a later stage in history gave

---

(1) Maṇḍanamiśra: Mīmāṁsānukramaṇikā (c. 800 A.D.) Benares. 1928. page
cf. the interesting glossary on the above ('kṣatriya eva rājā', verily the kṣatriya is the king') by Gaṅgānātha Jhā.

up, they affirm, their priestly office and took to agriculture. Hence their name Bhūmihāra ('bhūmim harati karṣati veti Bhūmihārah'). (The Bhūmihāra is one who tills the soil). They have consistently tried to get themselves counted as Brāhmans, but the 'Maithila' Brāhmans have refused to accept them into the fold. The animosity of these Brāhmans against the Bhumihārs goes deeper than their jealousy of the material prosperity of the Bhūmihārs. A comparative estimate of the manners and customs and the distribution of the population of the Brāhmans and the Bhumihārs suggests that we have here a survival of the old conflict between Brāhmanism and Buddhism, pursued ruthlessly until brought to a tragic end after the Mussalman invaders appeared on the scene and put the leading Buddhists to the sword, the rest fleeing in terror to Nepal or changing their Buddhism for Brāhmanism and an inferior position in the hierarchy of caste. But the Bhumihārs do not relish being told they are the descendants of the vanquished Buddhists. Memories of the final tragedy of Buddhism in Mithilā and Magadha at the end of the twelfth century A.D. have proved too bitter for them to allow their mind to go farther back into their history and derive consolation from the moving picture of the glorious days of Buddhism at Vaiśālī and Nālandā. The Jatharia section of the Bhumihārs inhabiting the districts of Champaran (south) and Muzaffarpur (west and south) have, however, been identified with the Jñātṛs

(Nātis)[1] of the ancient republic of the Lichhavis with their capital at Vaiśālī. We see no conflict between the claim of the Bhūmihārs to have descended from the Brāhmans of old and the theory that later on they embraced Buddhism and then after centuries were re-converted to Brāhmanism, when Buddhism lost its place in the land at the end of the twelfth century A.D. A more positive assertion on the point, however, cannot be made without further research into the vast literary sources, both Buddhist and Brahmanical, relating to the subject, and exploration of the huge amount of surviving archaeological material.

The Vaiśyas, originally the caste of the farmers and traders, third in order of superiority, and the last of the 'dwijas' the twice-born, have ceased, for all practical purposes, to be a single caste. They have split into numerous sub-castes according to their different professions, or groups of families. These sub-castes have today drifted so far apart from one another that no common bond exists among them. That is to say, they are separate castes.

The Kāyasthas form the caste of the professinal writers. The name occurs for the first time in Sanskrit literature in the first centuries of the Christian Era, but nowhere do we come across

---

(1) Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana: Purātattvanibandhāvalī Allahabad. 1937. pp. 107 ff.

any clear etymology of the term. Their history is long in any case, and they have developed a distinct mythology, as almost every one of the important sections of Indian population has done. A separate hierarchy of gods has been established presided over by Chitragupta, the Keeper of Lord Brahmā's office. From the earth to the heavens, it is they who run the offices. Leaving aside the consideration of their role in the heavens ~~about~~, we do actually find them doing the office-keeper's job, right from the top to the bottom, from Government secretariats to the petty zamindar's account-keeping. Their position as such makes them more dreaded than respected by the rest of the members of society. Many stories are current about the Kāyastha's manipulations of accounts bringing prosperity to some and economic ruin to others.

During the days of the Mussalmans' domination over India, the Kāyasthas behaved almost like the bureaucracy in the United Kingdom, basically unaffected by the change of government at the top. The Kāyasthas were as prominent in the Muslem Court as they had been in the courts of their predecessors, the Hindu Kings. The ways of the new Court were, however, quite different from those of its Hindu prototype, as different as Islam itself was from Hinduism. The Kāyasthas showed a remarkable capacity for adapting themselves to the new circumstances. They adopted Islamic ways, not necessarily as ordained in the Book

of the Prophet, the Holy Quran, but as practised by the Mussalman conquerors of India, reducing their Hindu ways to the basic minimum. Thus arose a new type of culture. The Kāyasthas were professedly Hindus, but educationally and in matters of common behaviour they were completely transformed by the Muslim fashions they had adopted. That transformation no doubt made life easy for them under their Muslim rulers at Delhi or in the outlying principalities all over India, but the nearer they came to the Court, the farther they drifted from the people, that is to say, from Hindu society. The speedy consolidation of the British domination in India in place of the vanished Mughuls, however, saved the Kāyasthas from impending disaster, economic or cultural. If anarchy had followed the end of the Mughul rule similar to the one that followed the death of Harṣa about twelve hundred years before, the Kāyasthas would have lost their means of livelihood. But the new rulers needed their services as urgently as the Mussalman invaders had done and the economy of the Kāyasthas survived unchanged. But the cultural problem remained unsettled, as it remains today. When in civil matters, the British accepted the existing Hindu Law-codes as the basis of their system of justice, the question arose of the position of the Kāyasthas in Hindu society; for the whole law was based on the conception of the society divided into the four varṇas, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra. To which of these

did the Kāyasthas belong ? Unless that was settled no legal decisions could be taken where they were involved. This brought about the well known 'case-laws' concerning the Kāyasthas, arising out of the decisions of the different high-courts in the different provinces. While one high-court in one province declared them to be kṣatriyas, the high-court in a neighbouring province held them to be Śūdras. The Kāyasthas in Bihar are kṣatriyas in law today; they are Śūdras in Bengal. No clearer commentary on the meaninglessness of caste could exist.

The history of the Śūdras is the history of a planned tyranny, exerted over them by their Aryan conquerors throughout the last four thousand years. No other people on the earth have suffered under slavery for so long. When an educated Indian prides himself on the long continuous history of the civilization of his land, little does he realise that while there have been long breaks in this history of his 'culture' and philosophy, the enslavement of a vanquished people has continued unbroken. There have been movements great and small against this slavery which has been shaken a number of times, and four times actually challenged unsuccessfully.

Dozens of sub-castes have been formed round the different occupations which the Śūdras took to as a means of livelihood. So much so that the Śūdras are no longer a single caste, but a generic name for

the people occupied in hard and menial duties. There have been sections among them, it is true, who have refused to surrender to the people of the master-race, such as the Dusādha (Duhsādha - difficult to control) of the Pāla inscriptions. The name survives as a castename today; the Dusādhs are thieves and robbers, well known to the police.

The Śūdras fall into two broad divisions - the high and the low, according as the food or water touched by them may or may not be acceptable to a member of the three higher castes, the dvijas, i.e. the Brāhmans, the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya. The relationship between the dvijas - the Aryans - and the Śudras, the non-Aryans, is reflected in their physical appearance. Dark skin, broad nose, flat face and short stature easily distinguish a low Śūdra from a high Śūdra or a dvija. Keot, Dhānuk, Ahir (also called Gopas or Goalas in Mithilā) and Kurmi are among the high Śūdras; Kahār, Dusādh, Telī (oilman), Chamār (shoe-maker), Dom, Mehtar (scavenger) and Musahar are among the low Śūdras. However, there are certain castes (sub-castes properly) among the Śūdras, such as Dhobī or Noniā or Tatamā, who do not come under one or other of these divisions. That is to say, they are high in some places, low in others. It all depends on their position in the society in a particular area as determined by their number, economic condition and their general mode of living. Wealth, number and cleanliness of living go a long way to determine the status of a sub-caste in society, throughout India as a whole.

Each sub-caste of the Śūdras, high or low, limits itself as the dvijas do in the matter of marriage. The definition of a caste is a matter of marriageability. Yet the marriage ceremonies and conventions are almost the same for all. The penalty for marrying a member of a lower caste or sub-caste is expulsion from the caste.

As against Mithilā, Magadha has been the strong-hold of the non-dvijas since the beginning of the Aryan colonisation of the region. It has always provided a home for rebels against Brāhmanic orthodoxy. As elsewhere, the people remembered little of their history, but to this day the Brāhmans across the Gaṅgā inspire in them fear rather than respect. For the Brāhmans of Mithilā to the north, the holy Gaṅgā herself loses her purity once she comes in contact with the shores of Magadha.

The southern fringes of Magadha and the Jhārakhaṇḍaplateau are inhabited by Santāls, Oraons and a number of other tribes of the old Austro-Dravidian races, still living in the primitive stage of human culture. Their ways have been influenced greatly by their contact with their semi-Aryan neighbours to the north in Magadha. They have taken to agriculture and use cotton clothes to cover their nakedness, but the general pattern of their life is still tribal. They form part of the long belt of tribal people stretching across India, east to west

along the Vindhyan range. With the gradual spread of education among them, their old ways are slowly giving way to modern fashions.

The racial composition of the people of modern Chotānagpur can be only vaguely determined. The Oraons in the western part of the Chotanagpur plateau speak a language that has affinity with the Dravidian languages of southern India.(1) The rest of these tribal peoples, Mundas, Hos, Kharias, Khonds, Birhors, Santals and others, speak languages that have affinity with the languages spoken by the Khasis, the Mon Khmers, Was, Palaungs of the Burma frontier. This whole group of languages has been named 'Austric' or 'Austro-Asiatic' and the same terms have been used to designate the peoples that speak them,(2) ~~but identity of race~~. Sarat Chandra Roy summaries the problems these peoples offer us as follows:

"Anthropometry has shown that there is no recognisable distinction in respect of physical type between the speakers of the Munda and those of the Dravidian languages".(3)

---

(1) E.A. Gait: Introduction (p. IV) to Sarat Chandra Roy's 'The Mundas and their Country'. Calcutta. 1912.

(2) Ibid. p. IV.

(3) Sarat Chandra Roy: 'The Mundas and their Country' Calcutta. 1912. p. 19.

CHAPTER III

THE KING

Harṣa and His Empire

The dynasty to which Harṣa belonged claimed descent from Puṣyabhūti, a devoted worshipper of Śiva. Prabhākaravardhana, father of Harṣa, raised the dynasty to greatness. He took the title of Mahārājādhirāja and was 'a lion to the Hūṇa-deer' (Hūṇāhariṇakeśarī).(1) Harṣa ascended the throne of Kanauj in 606 A.D. To begin with, he had to face a serious trouble. He had to rescue his sister, the Maukharī queen Rājyaśrī, the widow of Grahavarman, who had fled from her place of confinement at Kanauj. He had to avenge the death of his elder brother and predecessor and he had to consolidate his authority in the two kingdoms over which he was called upon to rule. One of his earliest acts was a treaty of alliance with Bhāṣkaravarman, the ambitious king of Kāmarūpa in modern Assam. Bāṇa, the court-poet of Harṣa, refers to the fact as 'atra devena abhiṣiktah Kumārah,'(2) (kumāra i.e. Bhāṣkaravarman, the ruler of Kāmarūpa or Assam was anointed king by the Lord, i.e. Harṣa). Yuan Chwang(3) tells us that in Ka-mo-lu-po (Kāmarūpa) "the reigning king, who was a Brāhman by caste, and a

(1) Bāṇa's Harṣacaritam, Calcutta 1892. p. 243.

(2) Radhakumud Mukherju: Harṣa, p. 44.

(3) Thomas Watters: Yuan Chwang, Vol. II. p. 186.
Samuel Beal: Si-yu-ki, Vol. II. p. 196.

descendant of Naravanadeva, was named Bhāṣkaravarman, his other name being Kumāra. The sovereignty had been transmitted in the family for one thousand generations."

He was in great fear of his powerful neighbour Śaśāṅka, the king of Karṇasuvarṇa, and this was probably the reason why he so readily extended the hand of friendship to Harṣa at the initial stage of his campaigns. It has been suggested that the Nidhānapur copperplate inscription[1] alludes to the triumphant entry of Bhāṣkaravarman into the capital of Karṇasuvarṇa after his victory, for it describes him as a vanquisher of 'hundreds of kings' and records a grant made from his camp there.

Bāṇa calls Śaśāṅka king of Gauḍa, and Yuan Chwang refers to him as king of Karṇasuvarṇa 'in recent times'[2] a persecutor of Buddhism,[3] who broke up the Buddhist monasteries between Kusinagara and Vārāṇasī,[4] threw stones at Pāṭaliputra showing the Buddha's foot-prints, into the Ganges,[5] cut down the Bodhi tree at Gaya, destroyed its roots down to water-level, and burned what remained,[6] and tried to

---

(1) Ep. Ind. XII. p. 66 ff.
(2) Watters, Yuan Chwang. II. p. 115.
(3) " " I. p. 343.
(4) Ibid. II. 43
(5) Ibid. II. 92
(6) Ibid. II. 115

violate the Buddhist temple there by replacing the image of the Buddha by that of Śiva.[1] Thus, though a king of Karṇasuvarṇa, he made his power felt over a much larger area. Bāṇa tells us how Harṣa's 'digvijaya' commenced with elaborate preparations for war against the Gauḍa king stigmatised as 'this vilest of Gauḍas' or 'the vile Gauḍa serpent'.[2]

Harṣa "devoted his signal ability and energy to the prosecution of a methodical scheme of conquest, with the deliberate purpose of bringing all India 'under one umbrella'. He possessed... a force of 5,000 elephants, 20,000 cavalry, and 50,000 infantry. Apparently he discarded as useless the chariots which constituted, according to ancient tradition, the fourth arm of a regularly organised Indian host; although they were still used in some parts of the country."[3]

With this formidable force behind him Harṣa overran northern India. Yuan Chwang says, "he (Harṣa) went from east to west subduing all who were not obedient; the elephants were not unharnessed, nor the soldiers unhelmeted".[4] By the end of five and a half years, the conquest of the north-western regions, and probably also of a large part of Bengal

---

(1) Ibid. II. 116.
(2) R.K. Mukherji: Harsa pp. 71-72.
(3) V.A. Smith: Early History of India, 4th ed. p.352
(4) Ibid.

was completed; and his military resources were so increased that he was able to put in the field 60,000 war elephants and 100,000 cavalry. He then reigned for thirty-five years longer, and during that period was able to devote most of his energy to the government of his extensive dominions.

Harṣa's long career of victory was broken by one failure. Pulakeśin II, the greatest of the Chālukya dynasty, who challenged Harṣha in the extent of his conquests, had raised himself to the rank of lord paramount of the South, as Harṣha was of the North.(1) The armies of Harṣa and Pulakeśin met on the banks of the Narmadā in about the year 620 A.D. Harṣa had to retire discomfited. Henceforward, he accepted the river Narmadā as the boundary-line between his own territory and that of his rival, Pulakeśin II Chālukya.

Harṣa's empire included the old kingdoms of Thānesar (in the eastern Punjab) and Kanauj (in the Gangetic Doab) and the provinces of Ahichchhatra (Rohilkhanda), Śrāvasti (Oudh) and Prayāga (Allahabad). Chinese evidence points to the inclusion of Magadha since 641 A.D. and also of Orissa. The rulers of adjoining territories such as Kashmir, Sind, Valabhi and Kāmarūpa accepted him as their overlord.(2) The Bānskhevā copperplate inscription(3) of the year 22

---

(1) V.A. Smith: Early History of India. 4th ed. p. 353.
(2) AHI. p. 158
(3) Ep. Ind. IV. pp. 208-11.

of the Harṣa era, i.e. of about 628 A.D., and the Madhuban plate[1] of year 25 (631 A.D.) both refer to the king (Harṣa) as Mahārājādhirājah (king of kings), a title which was usually adopted in ancient India by only a powerful ruler, accepted by rulers of small adjoining territories as their overlord.

The fortunate survival of Yuan Chwang's account of medieval India provides an important source of facts illustrating the cultural life of the period. Of Bhāskaravarman, the king of Assam, the Chinese pilgrim says that though he had no faith in the Buddha, he respected the learned Śramaṇas.[2] When the king first heard that a Śramaṇa from China (Yuan Chwang himself) had come to Nālandā Saṅghārāma to study the Law of the Buddha, he sent for him by a special messenger with a letter for Śīlabhadra, abbot of Nālandā, which was delivered to him after two days journey from Assam. His request not being responded to, it was renewed through another messenger.[3] Śīlabhadra having received the letter, addressed Yuan Chwang thus: "With regard to the king, his better mind(or, virtuous mind) is fast bound and weak; within his territories the Law of Buddha has not widely extended; since the time that he heard your honourable name, he has formed a deep attachment for you; perhaps you are destined to

---

(1) Ep. Ind. I. pp. 67-75
(2) Watters: Vol. II. p. 126
(3) Life of Yuan Chwang. pp. 170-71

be in this period of your existence his 'good friend', use your best intelligence then and go ... when you arrive in that country only cause the heart of the king to open (to the truth), and then the people will also be converted".(1)

Yuan Chwang then went with the envoy and arrived in Kāmarūpa. Bhāṣkaravarman was very much pleased to see him. He received him with great respect. The Chinese pilgrim stayed at the capital city of Kāmarūpa for more than a month. He then, along with Bhāṣkaravarman, went to meet Harṣa. They attended the assembly convened by Harṣa at Kanauj. It was a Buddhist convocation, and was held to give publicity to the doctrines of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The assembly was inaugurated by Harṣa himself attended by his friends and allies including Bhāṣkaravarman. Yuan Chwang also saw Bhāṣkaravarman attending the Mahāmokṣa Pariṣad at Prayāga (Allahabad). Here were worshipped along with the Buddha, Sūrya (Sun) and Śiva.(2) This account of Bhāṣkaravarman's relation with the Chinese traveller and his active participation in the religious ceremonies organised by Harṣa shows the spirit of tolerance possessed by kings of this period. Still more interesting are the instances of kings openly declaring their devotion to more than one religious

---

(1) Ibid. p. 171
(2) Ibid. p. 186

faith. It has been noted that several Pāla rulers paid reverence to both Buddhistic and Brāhmanic deities.

The chief source of the history of the Pāla kings is their inscriptions. The most important of these are the copperplate grants issued from the military camps at Pāṭaliputra (modern Patna) or Mudgagiri (modern Munger). It must be realized that their specific purpose was to perpetrate certain religious endowments both Brāhmanic and Buddhist. There are also numerous inscriptions on the images of both Brāhmanic and Buddhist dieties, both bronze and stone, as well as on temples - chiefly at Gaya, Vihāras at Nālandā and elsewhere - and on votive stūpas at the various Buddhist monasteries throughout Magadha.

Coins are conspicuous by their absence during the long rule of the Pāla kings over Mithilā, Magadha and Vaṅga. There is nothing intriguing or mysterious about this as has been suggested in certain quarters.(1) Of all the remains of a bygone age, coinage is the surest clue to the understanding of the economic position of the state that existed in that age. A sound economy must have its basis in a stable government which can adopt a definite policy with regard to its coinage system. There was anything but stability during the administration of the Pāla kings. It is wrong to say, as Majumdar does, that "under Pāla rule Bengal was to enjoy a period of prosperity undreamt

---

(1) HB. p. 668

of in her early annals".[1] The whole evidence both archaeological, including inscriptions, sculptures and literary sources, including the Purāṇas[2] and the works on poetry and philosophy which we shall examine in the later chapters, is against such an assertion. The Pāla kings had not even a fixed place which they could call their capital city, 'Rājadhānī'. The royal charters are issued from no seat of government. They are dated from the 'victorious' military camp at Pāṭaliputra or Mudgagiri. The king was at the head of the army which was ever on the move defending the territory from invading armies from almost all quarters.[3] The Pālas had inherited no stock of gold bullion which might enable them to issue coins of fixed weights and denominations as the acceptable medium of exchange. We are not definite how the exchange was carried on in the absence of a stable currency. As in all such times of disturbed conditions, people must have resorted to a barter system, ~~specie~~ probably silver being weighed out for each transaction. A similar system survived in Central Asia until modern times.

It is obvious that political affairs in Mithilā and Magadha were in the melting pot about the

---

(1) AHI. p. 165.

(2) It is generally agreed that most of the Purāṇas were given their final shape in the period between c. 700 A.D. and c. 900 A.D. which coincides with the period of Pāla rule over Mithilā, Magadha and Vaṅga.

(3) This state of affairs has existed elsewhere, both in ancient Persia and under Merovingian kings in Europe.

beginning of the last quarter of the fifth century A.D. after Skandagupta,[1] the last of the great Guptas, had ceased to be. Minor inscriptions discovered at numerous places in Magadha and the eastern districts of the United Provinces, as well as in Bengal, supply a long list of names of rulers ending in 'Gupta'.[2] There is no definite information as yet about the extent of the territory that each of them ruled or the relationship that they bore to one another. Strife and rivalry obviously followed the death of the last powerful Gupta king. The whole territory once under the single rule of the mighty monarchs of the Gupta dynasty disintegrated,[3] each of the rival claimants to the throne grabbing a portion equal to his strength in the fray.

The Hūṇa invaders persisted in the western provinces, inspite of their discomfiture at the hands of Skandagupta, the warrior prince and the last of the Imperial Guptas. The weakness of the later Guptas due to their mutual rivalry must have encouraged the Hūṇas to renew their efforts to extend their sway eastward. Their ambitions were, however, brought to an end by Yasodharman of Malwa before A.D. 533-34 when they disappeared from history. In the meanwhile the Puṣpabhūtis had established their sway over

---

(1) AHI. p. 150.

(2) Cunningham; ASI. Vol.

(3) Ibid. p. 151.

Thanesar and Kanauj, and the great Chalukya dynasty had arisen in the Deccan. As has been seen, in the north Harsa created a great but fleeting empire.

Harṣavardhana of Kanauj died in A.D. 647. The century that followed his death was one of extreme confusion throughout northern India including Mithilā and Magadha. Petty rulers holding small principalities indulged in a long series of aggressions against each other. The people were at the mercy of war-lords. The troubled situation in India tempted chieftains from beyond the Himālaya, from Tibet and China, to invade Mithilā.(1) It is clear that the last of the later Guptas who still held a small portion of Magadha, had no control over the situation and anarchy ruled supreme in the land.

GOPĀLA (c. 750 A.D.)(2)

There is no contemporary inscriptional record of Gopāla, the first Pāla king. He is, however, referred to with great respect in the inscriptions of his successors. The most important of these inscriptions for an estimate of the character and achievements of Gopāla is the Khalimpur(in the Maldah district of Bengal) copperplate grant of his son and successor Dharmapāla.(3) Five of the introductory

---

(1) HB. pp. 92-3.

(2) HB. pp. 176-177

(3) EI. Vol. IV. pp. 247-51.

verses of this document are devoted to a description of the lineage of the king which, however, only begins with his father Gopāla, and the state of anarchy that existed before he was installed as king by the choice of the people themselves. The record makes no mention of the procedure adopted for raising Gopāla, who does not seem to have been of royal descent, to kingship. "Matsyanyāyamapohitum prakṛtibhirlakṣmyāh karam grāhitah Śrī Gopāla iti ....."(1)

The phrase 'Matsyanyāya', the way of the fish, occurs only in this inscription and stands for a state of anarchy. It was to get rid of that 'matsyanyāya' where there is no restriction on one's desires and the stronger fish eat up the weaker ones, that the people "offered the hand of Lakṣmī", the goddess of wealth and power, to Gopāla. This has been generally assumed to mean that Gopāla was elected king by the mass of the people. Of late, however, doubts have been raised with regard to the appropriateness of the use of the term 'election' as we understand it today in this context. The authors of such court- inscriptions were panegyrists and exaggerated points in favour of their patrons. If a chieftain could manage to make himself so powerful that he could command the respect and allegiance of the lesser chieftains of his area, the latter could easily be made to bestow on him whatever position or title he would like to have for himself,

---

(1) Ibid. Verse 4.

and the people, having no will of their own, would have no other way than to acquiesce in whatever step was taken by the autocratic rulers. Election was contrary to the spirit of the age. The definition of the rights and duties of individuals or groups set out in the Dharmaśāstras no longer obtained. The rule of force had established itself completely. People were impatient to be rid of the painful uncertainty about their life and property. If Gopāla was powerful enough to restore peace and order in society, the people would willingly accept his rule.

Long before the advent of the Pālas, Indian politics had ceased to be a monopoly of the Kṣatriyas, assisted, not without mutual jealousies and strife, by their priests, the Brāhmans. Since after the Buddha's campaign against the caste-system, the Brāhman and the Kṣatriya never ceased their efforts to regain their dominance over the political affairs of the state, but their glory as set out in the ancient texts had gone for ever. Traditionally kingship was confined to Kṣatriyas; and yet no great dynasty that ruled in India after the sixth century B.C., the starting point of the material evidence for her history, had any real claim to Kṣatriya blood. The doctrine of the Buddha had not only shaken the courage of the Brāhman and the Kṣatriya in their attempts at upholding their position of endless privileges, but had also given the Śūdras, a sense of dignity and a faith in their future when the domination over them of the 'dvijas',

the Aryan-born, would be ended and they would speak to these latter not as slaves to the masters, but as man to man. The twelve centuries that intervened between the death of the Buddha and the coming to power of the Pālas saw the two greatest synasties, the Mauryas (B.C. 323 - B.C. 185) and the Guptas (A.D. 320 - A.D. 480), that ever ruled in India which were non-Kṣatriya.

DHARMAPĀLA (c. 770 A.D. - c. 810 A.D.)[1]

The Khalimpur copperplate[2] grant was issued by King Dharmapāla from his military camp at Pāṭaliputra in the thirty-second year of his reign. It is the record of a gift of four villages in the 'bhukti' of Puṇḍravardhana (north Bengal) made for the maintenance of the temple of god Nunnanārāyaṇa. Another inscription of Dharmapāla, again a copper-plate grant, was found at Nālandā[3] in the course of excavations in 1926-27. It is the record of a gift of the village Uttarāma in the Viṣaya of Gaya in Nagarabhukti (the metropolitan division). It was issued from his camp at Kapila, a place unidentified as yet. At Bodhagaya[4] a minor inscription of Dharmapāla has also been found.

---

(1) HB. pp. 176-177.

(2) EI. Vol. IV. pp. 243-54

(3) EI. Vol. XXIII. pp. 290-92.

(4) JASB. Ns. IV. p. 101.

On the basis of the place-names recorded in these inscriptions and their find-spots, we may form some idea of the extent of the territory ruled by Dharmapāla. It is clear from these inscriptions that Pāṭaliputra (Patna), Mudgagiri (Munger), and Gaya, forming the ancient land of Magadha, as well as Puṇḍravardhana (north Bengal), were under this Pāla king. Between Magadha and Puṇḍravardhana lay the ancient land of Aṅga (modern Bhagalpur) which, also, may be presumed to have formed a part of Pāla territory. It is difficult to say whether or not Mithilā was included in Dharmapāla's kingdom. Though in subsequent records Tīrabhukti does find a mention, it is nowhere referred to in the long lists of places preserved in the Khalimpur or Nālandā inscriptions of Dharmapāla. This does not mean either that Mithilā then formed a separate unit by itself, for there is no such suggestion, direct or indirect, in contemporary literature. On the other hand, legend has it that the philosopher, Vācaspatimiśra (842 A.D.), when pressed by poverty, made his way to the south in the direction of the Gaṅgā to present himself at the Court beyond the holy river, seeking royal patronage. Before he could reach the Court, however, he turned back home from the bank of the Gaṅgā. This, perhaps, suggests that there was no king in Mithilā, itself, and, if this was so, it might well have formed a part of the kingdom of the Pālas.

Dharmapala had by no means a peaceful reign. The centre of disturbance with which he had to cope seems to have been in the west and south-west. It was about a century since the Arabs had for the first time in 712 A.D. invaded and conquered the western-most provinces of India on the lower Indus. The confusion that followed the death of Harṣa in 648 A.D. must have been intensified by the appearance on the scene of the Arab invaders from the west.

The Buddhist subjects of King Dahir of Sind are said to have betrayed[1] their king and joined the Arab invaders under the command of Muhammad ibn-Kasim, who defeated Dahir in 712 A.D. and established Muslim rule over Sind. King Dahir was himself, it seems, a Brāhman, and inherited his throne from his father who had snatched it from the Śūdra king of the land, who may also have been a Buddhist. The Brāhmans themselves do not seem to have considered the invading Muslims to be altogether unfriendly where Buddhists were an important element in society. To them the Buddhists were their prime enemies. The Brāhmans' attitude towards Muslims today, or after the year 1030 A.D., when Mahmud Ghazni sacked the temple of Somanātha in Kathiawar, would completely mislead us if we accepted it as a continuation of their attitude towards them when they first appeared on the Indian scene. They would have no compunction in joining or aiding the Muslims in every way in order to dispose of

---

(1) AHI. p. 182.

the hated Buddhists, once and for all.

The Khalimpur inscription of Dharmapāla asserts that he had subdued a number of unnamed kings and brought the fickle fortunes of his house to stability.(1) He had within himself the whole prowess of the great legendary kings, Pṛthu, Rāma and Nala taken together. In another verse (No. 12) Dharmapāla is said to have installed the new king of Kānyakubja in the presence of the Kings of the Bhojas, Matsyas, Madras, Kurus, Yadus, Yavanas, Avanti, Gandhāra and the Kīras who were all full of ~~the~~ praise and respect for the King of Magadha. During his reign (c. 800 A.D.) the Yavanas, by whom the Muslims are intended, were well established in Sind and the provinces to the north. We may, therefore, allow for a certain exaggeration in the inscription when it refers to the spread of the King's suzerainty over the Kings of the Yavanas and Gandhāra in the west. This much is sure, however, that Dharmapāla brought a number of kings in the western provinces under his paramountcy. In the preceding verses in the inscription, Dharmapāla is said to be the 'King of Kings'(2)

---

(1) Ye bhuvan Pṛthu Rāma Rāghava Nalaprabhṛtayah
dharitrībhujas tānekatra didṛkṣunena nicitān
sarvān samam Vedhasā
Dhvastāśeṣanarendramānamahimā Śrī Dharmapālaḥ
Kalau
Lolaśrīkariṇīnibandhanamahāstambhah
samuttambhitah. (Verse 10)

(2) 'Svāmī bhūmipatīnām' (Verse 6)

and 'the one ruler over the entire globe'.(1) He was no doubt the over-lord of a number of kings, and his territory probably reached Assam in the east, the Himālayas in the north, the Bay of Bengal and the Vindhyas in the south. It is, however, extremely difficult to say how far and to what degree Dharmapāla extended his sway to the west, already in part, at any rate, a Muslim land.

It is clear from the Khalimpur inscription as well as from several later ones that the Gaṅgā or the Bhāgīrathī, the name generally given to it in the inscriptions, was the main line of communications during the rule of Dharmapāla and his successors. Though in the Khalimpur inscription the army of Dharmapāla is said to have reached the shores of the four seas and the rulers of the western provinces are described with their huge trains of horses, clouding the sky with the dirt of their hoofs, no land-route is ever mentioned. The Bhāgīrathī is vividly described, with its huge fleet of boats of diverse magnitude, providing a bridge across the river, the long line of lofty sails resembling a range of mountain-peaks. Though the author here does not mention the name of the mountains of his simile, he is obviously thinking of the Himālaya whose long range of snow-capped peaks stretch from the west to the east, almost parallel to the Gaṅgā, from

---

(1) 'Akhilavasumatīmaṇḍalam Śaśādekah'. (Verse 6)

Kānyakubja to Puṇḍravardhana, the western and eastern points respectively of the territory under the rule or suzerainty of Dharmapāla, and are visible from afar. Throughout the post-Vedic age, except perhaps the days of the great Mauryas and the Guptas, when road communications were highly developed and the water-ways suffered a proportionate decline in importance, the Gaṅgā with its tributaries has been the indispensable high-way of Āryāvarta (northern India). The massive stone-pillars and heavy door-frames elaborately sculptured and used in numerous temples and monasteries throughout Mithilā and the outlying areas north of the Gaṅgā must have been transported by river. The stone they are made of comes from Magadha. That tradition has not died out, inspite of the rapid development of roads and railways. The bulk of Mithilā's and her northern neighbour, Nepal's, trade in rice and maize and a number of other products is still carried down the rivers Kośī, Kamalā, Vāgmatī and Gaṇḍaka, which join the Gaṅgā and so go down to the sea below Calcutta. Most of India's ancient capitals stood on the banks of rivers, Benares, Allahabad, Kanpur and Kanauj on the Gaṅgā and Agra, Mathurā and Delhi on the Yamunā in Madhyadeśa. It is easy to see that such a system of perennial communications together with the importance of rivers for irrigation have made them sacred to the millions of toilers in the fields of India, so much so that the Gaṅgā is the holy Mother to them. Even the

muttering of the name of Gaṅgā a few hundred times would lead Man out of this miserable existence into the very land of the Blessed One!

Gaṅgā Gaṅgeti yo Brūyat Yojanāñam śatairapi
Mucyate sarvapāpebhyo Viṣṇulokam sa gacchati.

But the Gaṅgā was no mere means of communication or source of water-supply, it was the chief boundary-line between the territories held by Brāhmanism and Buddhism. To the north of the river, Mithilā was the stronghold of the Brāhmans, to its south Magadha remained predominantly Buddhist. The distribution of these two religions was more than a sacerdotal accident. It was rooted in the racial attitude itself of the people on either side of the Gṅgā. Mithilā with its Brāhmanic cult was still largely Āryan, while Magadha with its Buddhist faith was in the same proportion Dārvidian. Racial disparity persists. It will be a long time before mankind comes together and through a process of fusion, build their future as a single human race free from mutual jealousy and strifes. Thousands of years of close contact between the Āryan Brāhman, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya and their slaves, the Śūdras, have left them divided socially and morally. But for Buddhism the the non-Āryans in Magadha would have probably disappeared altogether.

While his subjects were thus sharply divided between the two religions, with their two

different traditions and ideals of life, Dharmapāla himself was a Buddhist, 'Paramasaugata',[1] the great disciple of Sugata, the Blessed One, the Buddha. The constant sectarian conflict at home and the fear of invasion by the predatory chiefs from beyond the border made his task difficult. Dharmapāla in a great measure, however, proved equal to the task. And if today he is not remembered as a great ruler, it is not because he lacked any of the qualities that go to make a man or a ruler great, loved and respected by posterity. The odds against him were so overwhelming that his achivements on the positive side were far less than those of his great predecessors, Harṣavardhana (648 A.D.), Skandagupta (465 A.D.), Samudragupta (375 A.D.) and Aśoka (232 B.C.). Even so his wisdom and catholicity in the affairs of administration are brought out clearly by the little bits of information supplied by his inscriptions. It may not be always easy to separate wisdom and charity from feebleness of spirit, but in the case of Dharmapāla we cannot think of his many gifts to Brāhman pandits and priests except against the background of his victories over his western adversaries. It is a fact that the Brāhmans, unlike the Buddhists, in matters social or religious, never really acted upon the principles of non-violence they preached. Their deeds were not according to their words. As

---

(1) Khalimpur Ins. EI. IV. pp. 247-51.

As we shall observe in a later chapter, they were responsible for bloodshed on the evidence of their own writings.[1] Special respect is expressly offered to the Brāhmans in the Khalimpur inscription: 'Brāhmaṇamānanāpūrvakam' (with respects to the Brāhmans). Dharmapāla was a Buddhist and this might well look like a concession to Brāhmanic arrogance as an expedient of state policy. It was so no doubt, and yet it may have been more than that. The bulk of the people within the Brāhmanic fold preserved a faith free from the fanaticism and ruthless pursuit of selfish ends under a religious smoke-screen adopted by the chosen few in the upper levels of society. What could be done for these innocent followers of a different faith by a Buddhist ruler ? Justice required that they be allowed to follow their own faith and pursue their peaceful occupations unmolested. It is to the credit of Dharmapāla that he more than fulfilled the requirements of justice and offered facilities for a better observance of the religious rites and ceremonies of a faith to which he did not belong.

This inscription[2] also mentions Nārāyaṇa-varmā as the 'sāmantādhipati' who built a 'devakulam' (temple) for the god 'Nunnanārāyaṇa' and for the

---

(1) Infra. Chap. IV. p.

(2) EI. IV. pp. 247-54.

maintenance of the temple with its Brāhman priest from 'Lāṭa' (Gujarāta) made an application to the king through Tribhuvanapāla, the 'dūtakayuvarāja' (prince emissary) for a gift of four villages of which full particulars are given in the preceding lines of the record. Now who was a 'sāmanta' ? Of late the term has been used in Hindi as a synonym for 'zamindār' which latter term came into use during the Muslim rule in India. But the term is derived from 'samanta', meaning boundary or limit. He who lives on the boundary, i.e. in the neighbourhood of one's territory came to be called a sāmanta ('samante bhavah'). A sāmanta was a neighbouring king or ruler who, after having been subdued by a stronger ruler, came to be a vassal or feudatory chief of the latter. He however retained the title 'sāmanta' (neighbour) in the modfied sense of a dependent chief who pays tribute to a lord paramount.(1) 'Sāmanta' first appears in Sanskrit inscriptions in the post-Gupta era. It occurs in a number of the inscriptions of the pre-Pāla rulers in Northern India. That gives ground for the inference that the term had already got its fixed connotation before it was used in the inscriptions of the Pālas of Magadha, from the latter part of the eighth century A.D. to the eleventh century A.D.

That the term 'sāmanta' appears as the first member of a compound 'sāmantadhipati' presents further

---

(1) Monier-Williams, M.: 'Sans.-Eng. Dictionary' Oxford. 1899. p. 1205.

difficulties. In the context of the inscription we might take 'sāmanta' as a mere wealthy citizen. He is no vassal chief who paid the annual tribute to his overlord and remained free in the internal affairs of his estate, e.g. to make endowments for religious and other purposes. Nārāyaṇavarmā approaches the Pāla king for an endowment of four villages for the maintenance of the temple of god Nunnanārāyaṇa. Was it because he had no proprietory right over any territory or just because the villages wanted for the endowment fell outside his own territory as in the case of King Bālaputradeva of Suvarṇadvipa, who requested Dharmapāla's successor Devapāla to make an endowment for the maintenance of a 'vihāra' he had caused to be built at Nālandā ?(1) The inscription does not mention that and we have no other evidence for arriving at a clearer picture of the functions of a 'sāmanta'. If we take him to have had some kind of proprietory rights of a limited nature, so that he could collect revenue from the peasants in occupation of the land, but would have no right to transfer the same to another person, then the 'sāmantadhipati' would be either a landlord with numerous sub-landlords under him and above the tillers of soil, or just the biggest or wealthiest of the numerous landlords owing direct allegiance to the king. The modern 'zamindār' in India in general, and in Mithilā

---

(1) EI. XVII. pp. 318 ff.

and Magadha in particular, can be traced to his origins in the ancient 'sāmanta' but the rights and functions of the two varied a great deal.

Dharmapāla's victories over the war-lords of northern India, and the establishment of his suzerainty over them, brought no lasting peace to the land. The defeated chiefs had surrendered, but none of them took the step with resignation. Secret or overt preparations for a renewal of hostilities against the Pāla king went on unabated. At home the religious conflict between the Brāhmans and the Buddhists was ever ready to flare up. In such a conflict the king could never be sure of loyal support from his leading subjects, especially the 'sāmantas' who would themselves be only too willing to snatch a chance to step into the position of their superior. The whole structure of the administration, therefore, had to be on a war-footing, so that the king's headquarters was his 'victorious military camp' - 'Vijayaskandhāvarah', at Pāṭaliputra or Mudgagiri, or wherever it was. There was, it seems, no fixed seat of government or capital city.

The last lines of the Khalimpur inscription give a clear, poignant picture of the mental state of the ruler and, incidentally, of the ruled. The king does not threaten transgressors of his law with civil punishment, inflicted by the state. They are threatened with damnation after death. His orders

for the gift are to be obeyed because, he says, disobedience will lead the recalcitrant into a hell of terror and fire after death - 'Yato bhavadbhih sarvvaireva bhūmerdānaphalagauravād apaharaṇe ca mahānarakapātādibhayād dānamidam anumodya paripālanīyam'. (1)

Uncertain about the future before which he stands, the king pauses and reflects on the past, the way of a mind that keeps its moorings under the stress of an impending catastrophe as under the circumstances that encourage elation. He remembers the great kings of the past, Sagara and others of legend as well as history. They all made gifts of land. But where are they now ? All into the oblivion of Time. Let us then, he says, keep to the present, for our land is ours only while we live to enjoy it, when we cease to be, it passes on to another. Why then try to grab things so impermanent ?

'Bahubhir vasudhā dattā rājabhih Sagarādibhih.
Yasya yasya yadā bhūmih tasya tasya tadā phalam.' (2)

The sentiment has a parallel in the lines supposed to have been composed by Bhoja of Dhara about two hundred years after Dharmapāla, when the later Pālas were still struggling to keep their hold on Magadha and Mithilā. They are addressed to his uncle Muñja, who has usurped the throne of his father and has contrived to get him

---

(1) EI. Vol. IV. pp. 247-54 Khalimpur Ins.
(2) Ibid.

murdered in a far off jungle where the plan is revealed to Bhoja:

'Māndhātā ca mahīpatih kṛtayugālaṅkārabhūto gatah.
Setur yena mahodadhau viracitah kvāsau Daśāsyāntakah
Anye cāpi Yudhiṣṭhiraprabhṛtayo yātā divam bhūpate
Naikenāpi samam gatā vasumatī Muñja tvayā yāsyati.'

In the concluding verses, the reflection on life and Destiny is brought to the height of pessimism and resignation. Life and affluence are, he says, like the fickle water-drop on the leaf of a lotus-plant ('kamaladalāmbuvindulolām śriyamanucintya manuṣyajīvitañca'). Wealth and power are like the flashes of lightning ('taḍittulyā Lakṣmīh'); and this bodily frame itself is no better than the flickering flame of a lamp ('tanurapi ca dīpānalasamā').

About a thousand years before Dharmapāla another great king, Aśoka, ruling over the same land from the same city of Pāṭaliputra, set down in his inscriptions his reflections on the course and objects of human endeavour. Aśoka set about giving peace and prosperity to society after he had brought a number of war-like chiefs under his control through a series of battles and victories as even Dharmapāla tried to do. Both were ardent followers of the Buddha. But with all these parallels, times were far different for Dharmapāla from those of his great predecessor. Aśoka had no Democle's sword in an extremely uncertain future constantly hanging over his head. He says

things as profound as, and even more than, the observations of Dharmapāla without the sadness or the gloom of the latter. He is confident of himself. He knows his way. He is in no such elation as might in the glory of his achievements dazzle his vision and lead him astray. He is conscious of the goodness in his people as well as of the dark spots in their morals. In his natural paternal attitude to them he treats them with a searching criticism of their whole outlook: "Kayānam meva dekhati, iyam me kayāne kaṭe; no mina pāpam dekhati, iyam me pāpe kaṭe". (1) Mind thy defects, he would say, and reform thy way. He would appeal to Man's reason and unlike Dharmapāla, would invoke no aid from a supernatural power. He faces his people with reason and command and obedience follows. Dharmapāla on the other hand is never sure that he would be obeyed. He is therefore full of persuasions and entreaties and even, contrary to the Buddhist faith as understood and followed so far, invoked divine wrath on those that neglected to follow his decrees.

To Dharmapāla as to his people the world itself is but misery ('bhavo duhkhaikāntah'). (2) The full implication of this passage is brought out when set against the numerous passages about extreme

---

(1) E. Hultzsch: Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum Vol. I. Oxford. 1925. (pillar edicts)

(2) Khalimpur Ins. EI. IV. pp. 247 ff.

poverty in the contemporary literature and the starving figures in the sculpture of the day. We, in the middle of the twentieth century, are only too well aware of the devastating effects on our agriculture brought about by a prolonged war. Dharmapāla at the end of the eighth century A.D. was in no better situation. He had successfully concluded a long series of battles with his war-like contemporaries, and had just to keep ready for another. No ruler under such circumstances has ever been able to look after the normal requirements of a people who themselves did not know if they would be able to gather harvest in the field they would plough for their food-crops. The constant fear of another war and the consequent decline in agriculture brought about a disorganization in the society. Order was dwindling every day. A class of professional law-breakers arose. They were 'duhsādhas' (those hard to control). A special class of police-officers to bring them under law had to be provided for. These were the 'Dauhsādhasādhanikas' (Controllers of the Law-breakers).(1) Besides, there were the officers for stopping thefts. They were called 'Cauroddharaṇikas'.(2) The Duhsadhas (in Hindi 'Dusādha') still continue as a class of professional house-breakers. They have now even long enjoyed the status of a sub-caste under the Śūdras and have developed a whole set of separate customs about

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

birth, marriage, and death. Even today they are a problem for the Police and a source of anxiety for the law-abiding well-to-do citizens.

All this was sufficient to cause in King Dharmapāla a disgust with the world itself. What else could be there for a man with a heart and conscience ? Had he been different from what he was he would have overlooked the groans of a people fruitlessly struggling under starvation for a morsel of food that would have brought them the paradise on earth and thereby would have kept his mind at ease. But he chose to struggle along with his people for a better lot for all of them. And it was for no victories in the battle-fields far away from the borders of his territory that his people loved him. It was the man in Dharmapāla that took him to the heart of the people. When passing along the road, he would be lovingly greeted by cowherds, groups of children at play, the common people of the village and a host of other ordinary folk, his modesty would never allow him to receive the greetings with a kingly gesture. He would just keep his head low and pass on.(1)

We do not know how Dharmapāla would have behaved had he not been a Buddhist. It is true no religious doctrine can bring about a sudden change in human character. There is no quick way to attaining

---

(1) Khalimpur Ins. EI. IV. pp. 247 ff. verse 13.

nobility of spirit. It is difficult to analyse the contributions to the making of a great character. The religion of the Buddha once again shows the excellence of its inner content through Dharmapāla as through so many great souls before and after him.

DEVAPĀLA (c. 810 A.D. - 850 A.D.)[1]

Two copperplate-grants issued by Devapāla from his 'camp of victory' at Mudgagiri (Munger) have so far been discovered. They both record gifts made by the king, to a Brāhman paṇḍit in one case, and to a 'Vihāra' (monastry) at Nālandā in the other. The Munger[2] and the Nālandā[3] inscriptions, as they are commonly known according to their find-spots, are much the same except for the names of the donees and villages granted them. The Munger copperplate was the first inscription of the Pāla kings to be discovered in 1780 A.D. In 1781 it was deciphered by Charles Wilkins, who published a translation of it in 1783 in pamphlet form. It was republished in the 'Asiatic Researches' Vol. I in 1788. The text and its translation were together published by F. Kielhorn in 'Indian Antiquary' Vol. XXI, 1892. Finally, a revised reading of the text with its translation appeared in Epigraphia Indica Vol. XVIII (1925) by L.D. Barnett. The story of the discovery of this

---

(1) HB. pp. 176-7.

(2) EI. Vol. XVIII. pp. 304 ff.

(3) EI. Vol. XVII. pp. 318 ff.

inscription in 1780 and the subsequent speculation that it started about ruling dynasties and their chronology in Indian history, has an interest of its own, apart from the long forgotten facts of history that it revealed.

The Munger copperplate grant is dated the twenty-first day of Mārgaśīrṣa (November-December) of the year 33 ('Samvat 33 Mārgadine 21'). When first discovered, no one could say what the era used was. It was only decades later, when the Sāranātha inscription[1] bearing the name of King Mahīpāla and the year 1083 of the Vikrama era was discovered, that the mystery of the era of the Pāla kings was solved and their chronology approximately established.

Devapāla was the son of Dharmapāla and Rannādevī, daughter of King Parabala of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in the Deccan. In verse 9 of the Munger, as well as in Nālandā copperplates recording Dharmapāla's marriage with the Rāṣṭrakūṭa princess, the Pāla king is described as a 'gṛhamedhin', a significant term here. 'Gṛhamedha' or Gṛhayajña is the daily sacrificial offering made by a Brāhman householder to Vedic deities. Now Dharmapāla was a Buddhist and the whole ethos of Buddhism was in opposition to such Vedic rites. Besides this, in verse 5 of the same inscriptions, he is said to

---

(1) IA. Vol. XIV. p. 139.

have upheld the caste-system ('Varṇnan pratiṣṭhāpayatā svadharme'). It is clear therefore that Dharmapāla was not only favourably disposed towards Brāhmanism but he had no objection to performing Vedic rites if that was to the satisfaction of his people. The king's marriage with the Rāṣṭrakūṭa princess must have been solemnised according to the Vedic rites. It is well known that the Rāṣṭrakūṭas were ardent followers of Brāhmanism. This was, therefore, a definite concession made to them by Dharmapāla.

Diplomatic marriages are a common feature of Indian history; a weak ruler could assuage a potential enemy by the offer of his daughter's hand. King Parabala of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas appears to have felt the need of this alliance with Dharmapāla. The offer of a daughter in marriage among the Rajputs has always been interpreted as the acceptance by the father of an inferior position. Even today in Bihar as elsewhere in India, the marriage procession of a Rajput young man is conceived as an army on march, and occasionally it behaves as such, if the bride's people are found to be wanting in proper respect to the superior status of the bridegroom's party. Both the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Pālas strove to obtain possession of Kanauj; Dharmapāla succeeded and was clearly the dominant partner in the alliance.

Devapāla inherited a peaceful kingdom from his father Dharmapāla ('Rājyamāpa nirupaplavam pitur

Bodhisattva iva saugatam padam').[1] In the verses quoted below is described the victorious advance of Devapala's army into different regions, reaching the sea in the south and west and Kedāra in the Himālaya to the north-west. If his territory was free from turmoil ('nirupaplavam'), there would have been little need of sending out these troops. One of the avowed aims of the king must have been to extend the bounds of his empire beyond what he had received from his great father, and, in point of fact, he did subjugate Utkala and a few other principalities lying to the south and west, as is recorded in the Bhagalpur copperplate grant of Nārāyaṇapāla.[2] Another reason may have been to demonstrate to his vassal chiefs at home his military strength in order to keep them quiet.

The Munger copperplate grant, also, provides evidence of the growing influence of Brāhmans at the court of the Buddhist king. It is true the most orthodox of them still avoided playing direct obeisance to the Buddhist ruler and probably some of them even nursed the secret intention to get rid of him too. But the bulk of them reconciled themselves to the new order, exacting as many privileges as they could get from the state. Dharmapāla's gift recorded in his Khalimpur copperplate grant was made to a Brāhmanic

---

(1) Munger and Nālandā copperplates. Verse 12.

(2) IA. Vol. XV. pp. 304-10.

institution, the temple, and not to any individual Brāhman or the priests there who looked after the temple and performed the daily rites. It seems that the priests had no rights over the property granted to the temple save what they drew upon for their own maintenance. They were mere caretakers. The Brāhman in the Munger copperplate grant of Devapāla, however, stands in his own right as the beneficiary of the royal patronage. Vīhekarātamiśra, the name is rather peculiar, the beneficiary, is by gotra an Aupamanyava (descendant of the ṛṣi Upamanyu)[1] and follower of the Āśvalāyana school of the Vedic ritualists.[2] As suggested by the epithets used for his father and grandfather in the same text, his allegiance to that particular school of Vedic ritualists, however, seems to be only nominal. For while his grandfather Bhaṭṭaviśvarāta is stated to be a Vedārthavid (versed in the Vedic studies) and Yajvan (he who performs 'Yajña' i.e. the rites prescribed in the Vedas) and his father Bhaṭṭaśrīvarāharāta, 'Vidyāvadātacetah' (well-refined through acquisition of knowledge), he is described as 'padavākyapramāṇavidyāpāraṅgata' (having a profound knowledge of Grammar, Logic and Philosophy). There is no mention of his attainments in the Vedic studies and practices in which his grandfather had distinguished himself. The influence

---

(1) 'Aupamanyavasagotraya'.

(2) 'Āśvalāyanasabrahmacāriṇe'.

of Vedic ritualism in his family seems, therefore, to have already weakened, if not disappeared altogether, in the days of his father, who is not mentioned as having any special distinction in that direction. His own interests were Grammar, Logic and Philosophy, in which Brāhmans and Buddhists emulated each other and obtained similar ~~of~~ distinct results, according to individual temperament rather than to set theories or the teaching of the schools.

This modification in the family tradition of Vīhekarātamiśra in favour of a less sectarian way of life, brought about in the course of only two generations, can only be explained as having been influenced by Buddhism with which he came into close contact at the Pāla king's court. The Brāhmans are generally known to be uncompromisingly conservative. If we, however, take into account the large number of Brāhmans who have, throughout the history of India, adapted their ways to the changing conditions of life as against the small minority who have withstood change, the myth of the 'Sanātanadharma' (the changeless order) is apparent to the modern mind.

Meṣikā, the village (grāma) granted to Vīhekarāta, lay in the Krimilā viṣaya (district) of the metropolitan division. That means it was in Magadha. It is to be noted that the only inscription of a Pāla king older than the one under discussion, in which a gift has been made to a Brāhman, is the

Khalimpur copperlate grant[1] of Dharmapāla. In that document the four villages granted for the upkeep of god Nunnanārāyaṇa's temple under the care of a Brāhman from Lāṭa ('Pratipālakalāṭadvija') lay in Puṇḍravardhana. None of these royal endowments lay in Mithilā, the stronghold of anti-Buddhist Brāhmanic orthodoxy. Only two generations later do we come across the record of such a gift made in Mithilā (Tīrabhukti) by Nārāyaṇapāla.[2] Accepting the meagreness of evidence, is it to be tentatively concluded, then, that up to the time of Devapāla the Brāhmans of Mithilā had not reconciled themselves to their Buddhist rulers, the Pālas ? That conclusion may not be far off the mark when, as we shall observe in a later chapter, we take into account that an influential section of the Brāhmans in Mithilā remained either hostile or indifferent to Buddhism to the very end of the Pāla rule. When the last of the Pālas were unable to check the disintegration of their territory, these lost no time in inviting to be their king a warrior from the south, Nānyadeva who had sought to further his fortunes in the confusion that followed the internal strifes among the later Pālas. It was the Brāhmanic Senas of Bengal, who eventually won dominance in north-eastern India.

---

(1) Supra p.

(2) Bhagalpur copperplate of Nārāyaṇapāla. IA. XV. pp. 304-10.

NĀLANDĀ

The Nālandā copperplate[1] inscription is especially important for two reasons. Firstly, it records diplomatic and cultural contacts with the island kingdoms of the East Indies, and secondly, it gives a glimpse of the role of Nālandā in contemporary society. The grant was issued in the year 33 (or 39 ?) of his reign by Devapāla. King Bālaputradeva of Suvarṇadvīpa, evidently a Buddhist, built a 'vihāra' at Bālanda. He sent his envoy subsequently to the court of King Devapāla of Magadha, in whose territory Nālandā was situated, to request him to make a grant of five villages for the maintenance of this 'vihāra'. Devapāla agreed. The five villages that were granted for the purpose were Nandivanāka, Maṇivāṭaka, Naṭikā and Hasti in the 'Viṣaya' (district) of Rājagṛha and Palāmaka, in the 'viṣaya' of Gaya, all in the Nagarabhukti (metropolitan division). Rājagṛha being about five miles from Nālandā and the district of Gaya lying close to Rājagṛha, the villages seem to have been situated in the area round about Nālandā so that in the absence of any means of seift communications under the conditions obtaining then, they might be easily accessible from the headquarters of the temple management at Nālandā.

The purpose of the gift, as stated in the record, was to finance the monastery. From it

---

(1) EI. XVII. pp. 318-24.

emanated the school of Buddhist teaching based on the Prajñāpāramitā, the transcendental realization which leads on to Nirvāṇa. Out of the same funds provided from the revenue of the five villages, [illegible] met expenditure on the worship of the Tāntrika Bodhisattvas, as well as the expenses of the members of the Bhikṣusaṅgha, the monastic order. The monks were to be provided with food, clothing, accommodation and medical aids in case of illness. Provision was also made for the employment of copyists to prepare manuscripts of the Dharmaratnas, the authoritative works of Buddhism. A certain amount was also set apart for the repair of the monastery whenever necessary.(1)

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Brian H. Hodgson, the resident minister of the East India Company at Kathmandu (Nepal), collected a number of manuscripts copied at Nālandā under this and other

---

(1) "Bhagavato Buddhabhaṭṭārakasya Prajñāpāramitādisakaladharmaneṣtristhānasyayārthe Tāntrikabodhisattvagaṇasyāṣṭamahapuruṣapudgalasya caturddisāryyabhikṣusaṅghasya balicarusatracīvarapiṇḍapātaśayanāsanaglānapratyāyabheṣajyadyārtham dharmaratnasya lekhanādyartham vihārasya ca khaṇḍasphuṭitasamādhanārtham śāsanīkṛtya pratipāditah."

Nālandā Copperplate Ins.

EI. XVII. pp. 318-24.

similar provisions. When in 1199 A.D. Bakhtiar Khilji at the head of a comparatively small number of Muslim horsemen raided Nālandā, massacred the monks and set the monasteries with their libraries aflame, a number of monks managed to escape to Nepal with as many of their manuscripts as they could carry with them. These manuscripts now preserved in the libraries of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, reveal through their text and paintings a fine tradition, evidence of a mind calm and alert even amid the hysteria of troubled times. Here, therefore, we have a flimpse of the monastic order of Buddhism, as a living entity. It was not a perfect organisation, but it was a sincere, sustained effort towards the amelioration of human suffering. It met failure, as so many other similar efforts have done in different lands, at different times, but the spirit lives on under changed names in changing circumstances. It is easier to preserve the letter rather than the spirit of benevolence. Yet we see even today in Mithilā and Magadha temples of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Durgā and other Brāhmanic deities, richly endowed, which trace their origin to ancient endowments made to Buddhist monasteries, later on extended under the enlightened policy of the Buddhist Pāla rulers to cover the temples of the rival religion. The original Buddhist monasteries were either destroyed by the invaders, as at Nālandā, or usurped by the Brāhmans, as at Bodhagaya, who replaced the Buddhist images

with those of the Brāhmanic deities and, indeed, in a number of cases adopted the Buddhist gods and goddesses with the same or changed names and admitted them into their own Pauranic pantheon. While the Buddha himself came to be counted as the ninth of the ten major incarnations of the Supreme Lord of the Universe, the Buddhist Tārā was accepted as another form for Durgā. It is, however, gratifying to note that the spirit of Buddhism is receiving through the works of Haraprasāda Śāstrī, Gaṅgānātha Jhā, Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana and others, the respectful attention of the educated section of the followers of Brāhmanism throughout India today. The old dislike of the Buddhists seems to have given way to a repentance for what the ancestors of the Brāhmans of today did to the followers of Lord Buddha a thousand years and more ago, and to an understanding of and deep sympathy for the fundamental tenets of Buddhism. Evidence of this is apparent to all in the adoption of the Buddhist Dharmacakra as the national emblem by the Union of India. Thus is repaid the debt the followers of Brāhmanism owed to the generosity of the great Buddhist rulers of the Pāla dynasty such as Dharmapāla, Devapāla and Nārāyaṇapala.

According to the Nālandā copperplate, Devapāla not only possessed a smiling face ('prasanna-vaktra'), but was pure in thought and speech ('nirmalo manasi vāci'), self-controlled in his action ('saṁyatah kāryakarmaṇi') and mindful of the goodness of his

efforts ('sthitah śucau'). We must accept him as such, for had he been otherwise he was sure to have been painted as a devil by his Brāhman opponents in the north (Mithilā), always ready to criticise. While it is to the credit of the Buddhist Pālas in particular, and the followers of Buddhism in general, that they could preserve the integrity of their character in the face of bitter rivalry, the sectarian Brāhmans who maintained their resistance to Buddhism all through are to be here, at least, congratulated for their respect for truth in stating the facts about their adversaries.

Since the Buddha first turned the wheel of Law for the first time in Migadāva, the Deer Park at Banāras, after his enlightenment at Gaya, it was Brāhmans that supplied the best elements in his Order. The Brāhmanic fold was too hide-bound and narrow for the catholic spirit, and the best minds born amongst them had to seek an outlet in the freedom of the Buddhist way of life and thought. That flow of chosen spirits from Brāhmanism to Buddhism, which started in the days of the Buddha himself, continued even up to the times of the Pālas. The Ghosrāwā (Bihar) stone inscription[1] set up at Nālandā in the reign of Devapāla bears vivid testimony to this fact.

The inscription is in brief the biography of Ācārya Vīradeva of Nālandā. Born in a Brāhman

---

(1) IA. Vol. XVII. pp. 309-10.

family of means in Nagarahāra, near Jallalabad in Afghanistan, early in his boyhood he showed signs of extraordinary intelligence. Even as a boy he indulged in thoughts of the 'other world', and took no interest in the opportunities of pleasure provided for in his family. His heart was set on leading the life of a monk in the path of the Sugata, the Buddha. Having learned the Vedas and the Śāstras, he came to Ācārya Sarvajñaśānti, at the great monastery named after King Kaṇiṣka (Kaṇiṣkamahāvihāra) in Peshawar, and lived there, devoted to austerities. Later he came to Magadha to pay a visit to the Mahābodhi at Gaya. From there he went to the Yaśovarmapuravihāra to see a number of monks from his own land; this vihara cannot be identified, but was between Gaya and Nālandā. Here he resided for a considerable time and for his exquisite friendliness and amiable behaviour he earned not only the love of his fellow-monks in the monastery, but also the respect of King Devapāla himself. He caused two huge vihāras to be built at Nālandā for the benefit of the Saṅgha, the Buddhist Order, in their efforts for the advancement of social welfare. He was immensely popular with the suffering people who regarded him as the single refuge of the down-trodden and the destitute. He was a source of consolation to the ~~~~ ~~town~~ under anxieties of a diseased age. His presence itself was reassuring to the miserable, so much so that he overshadowed the name of even the celebrated legendary physician,

Dhanvantari. The passage[1] reads like Wordsworth's lines on Goethe's death, whom he calls 'The physician of the Iron Age'.

VIGRAHAPĀLA I (c. 850 A.D. - 854 A.D.)

No extant inscription dated in the reign of King Vigrahapāla I has been so far discovered. Two image-inscriptions[2] bearing his name are of not much use in reconstructing a picture of the life and times of the king. Scanty but valuable information about him is, however, supplied by the Bhagalpur copperplate[3] grant of Nārāyaṇapāla, son and successor of Vigrahapāla.

There is still some doubt about the name of Vigrahapāla's father. He succeeded Devapāla, but the Bhagalpur inscription is not clear as to his parentage. Some hold that he was the son of Devapāla, while others suggest that he was the newphew of the late king and son of his paternal uncle, Jayapāla, who, himself, was the son of Vākpāla, the younger brother of Devapāla's father, King Dharmapāla. Since the pronoun standing

---

(1) "Cintājvaram Śamayatārttajanasya dṛṣṭyā
Dhanvantarerapi hi yena hatah prabhāvah.
Yascepsitārthaparipūrṇamanorathena
Lokena Kalpatarutulyatayā gṛhītah."
(Ibid)

(2) JASB. New Series. IV. p. 108.

(3) IA. XV. pp. 304-10.

for the name of Vigrahapāla's father immediately follows the description of the exploits of Jayapāla, it would be more in consonance with the rules of syntax to take 'tat' in 'tatsūnuh' for Jayapāla, and thus accept him as the father of King Vigrahapāla I. Moreover, later in the same inscription, Nārāyaṇapāla is described merely as the son of King Vigrahapāla ('Mahārājādhirājaśrīvigrahapāladevapādānudhyātah'), while it is customary in such records to give the lineage at least up to the grandfather. Had the illustrious Devapāla been his grandfather, the author of the praśasti would not have omitted his name, for it would surely have enhanced his prestige in the eyes of all. Jayapāla was just a general, though of no mean order, of King Devapāla and, therefore, not sufficiently dignified to be named as the grandfather of a king.

Vigrahapāla is described as an 'ajātaśatru', one without an enemy, etymologically, one for whom none was born as an enemy. This term has been misused ever since its first appearance in Indian literature, when Kunika after having killed his father, Bimbisāra, took the throne and styled himself 'Ajātaśatru' in the sixth century B.C. while the Buddha was still alive. The term loses its sense, when in the succeeding lines Vigrahapāla is described as having subjected his enemies to the utmost miseries ('ripavo yena gurvvīnām, vipadāmāspadīkṛtāh').

Vigrahapāla seems to have carried on warfare with a number of chiefs, who had become powerful since the passing away of the powerful Devapāla, leaving his throne without a direct claimant. In a case of indirect succession, almost invariably troubled arises between rival claimants to the vacant throne, at the cost of peace. Vigrahapāla maintained his rule for some time, but at last he seems to have proved unequal to the task and decided upon renouncing the throne in favour of his son Nārāyaṇapāla, himself retiring to the life of a recluse.

Much has been made in the past in India by moralists and metaphysicians of the life of renunciation. It is generally accepted to be the sign of an elevated spirit, too high and wide to be contained within the narrow bounds of social custom. Without ruling out that possibility, however, in most cases it is only the result of disgust with and fear of the miseries of reality. It is a fact that some of the best characters in Indian history and legend have taken the way of the saṁnyāsin; they cannot be accused of meaness of spirit. The author of the Bhagalpur copperplate inscription compares Vigrahapāla with Sagara of the Ikṣvākus, who renounced the throne in favour of Bhagīratha.

"Tapo mamstu rājyante
dvābhyāmuktamidam dvayoh.
Yasmin Vigrahapālena
Sagareṇa Bhagīrathe." (Verse 17)

Sagara's renunciation followed the great disaster in which sixty thousand of his sons and kinsmen perished. Those whose spirits travel beyond the narrow circle in which they are born must wish to be of some help to their fellow creatures. It is only when the circumstances are overwhelming and they find themselves useless that they give up the struggle and retire. Neutrality, as we generally understand it, is against the law of Nature. We must take sides according to our lights. Vigrahapāla sturggled while he could. When the odds were too great, he surendered.

NĀRĀYAṆAPĀLA (c. 854 A.D. - 908 A.D.)

The Bhagalpur copperplate grant[1] of Nārāyaṇapāla was issued from his 'Camp of Victory' at Mudgagiri in the year 17 of his reign. The inscription,[2] which is on an image from Bihar, however, mentions the year 54 of his reign. That gives a long period of at least fifty-four years for Nārāyaṇapāla's reign. The length of his reign was probably due to two reasons: firstly, Nārāyaṇapāla must have come to the throne at a fairly early age, when his father Vigrahapāla renounced it in his favour; secondly, he must have been a strong and capable ruler as is evidenced from the measures he took to keep his enemies in check and his people satisfied.

---

(1) IA. Vol. IV. pp. 304-10.

(2) IA. Vol. XLVII. p. 110.

The Bhagalpur copperplate grant records Nārāyaṇapāla's gift of the village of Makutikā in the Kakṣaviṣaya of Tīrabhukti to an unnamed temple, of a thousand shrines ('sahasrāyatana') dedicated to Śiva. The king himself caused the temple to be built and made the endowment to maintain it, together with the assembly of the principal officiants of Śiva Paśupati ('Mahārājādhirajaśrī Nārāyaṇapāladevena svayamkāritasahasrāyatanasya tatra pratiṣṭhāpitasya Bhagavatah Śivabhaṭṭārakasya Pāśupata Ācaryapariṣadaśca yathārham pūjāvalicarusatranavakarmmādyartham śayanāsanaglānapratyāyabhaiṣajyapariskārādyartham). Before this, gifts to Brāhmans or the Brāhmanic deities had been made by Devapāla and Dharmapāla, but this was the first time in the history of the Pālas, as far as we know from the available records, that the Buddhist king himself takes the initiative in the actual building of a temple for a Brahmanic deity. This is also the first record of a gift made by a Pāla king in Tīrabhukti (Mithilā). The inscription has therefore a double significance, political and well as cultural. Politically it seems to indicate a closer approach to the Brāhmanical people of Mithilā on the part of their Buddhist ruler from Magadha. Culturally it shows a new influence in the religious life of the people in Mithilā, the cult of Śiva Paśupati.

As has been said, since the colonisation of Mithilā by the Āryans (c. 1000 B.C.), the prevailing religion of the people there had been based upon the

Vedic yajñas, involving sacrifices of animals. Śiva as a deity does not appear in the early Brāhmanic pantheon. It was only considerably later in the first five centuries of the Christian era, when the Purāṇas were given more or less their present shape, that this god appears as a deity of composite character. The prowess of the ancient Rudra of the Vedas was retained, but the aspect of terror and destruction was tempered with benevolence and the reformed god was given the name Śiva, the good.

Even after the introduction of Śiva into the Brāhmanic pantheon, the god was for a long time looked upon with disfavour by the orthodox. The people in general were, however, more generous and they eagerly welcomed the new deity. With the dehumanisation of Buddhism in priestly hands, there was no alternative to it. The old Vedic ritualism could no longer meet the religious needs of the bulk of a population, submerged in poverty and ignorance.

Nārāyaṇapāla must have been aware of these tendencies in the people of Mithilā and taken this opportunity to win the confidence, so long denied to him and his predecessors, through the intransigence of the priestly class, by creating facilities for the worship of the new god they had adopted. The king must have been helped in this new endeavour by the Pāśupatas from Southern and Western India, the stronghold of the followers of Śiva. Once again

contacts with Western India may be traced in Pāla history. Later on we shall consider the factors that not only attracted these Pāśupatas from the south and west, but also Brāhmans from the west, Lāṭa (Kathiawar) and Pañcāla (the western districts of the United Provinces). All these came to the court of the Pala kings in Magadha to enjoy their royal patronage.

A bird's eye view of the cultural position in Mithilā, even today reveals the existence of two cultural belts parallel to each other, extending east to west from the Kośī to the Gaṇḍaka. While the northern belt has retained its Brahmanic orthodoxy from the beginning, the southern has constantly undergone sudden changes. The plains to the north of the Gaṅgā are a high-raod, open to invasion, cultural as well as military. The prejudice that the northern Brāhmans have to Magadha, they extend, though in a milder form, to the people of the southern belt of Mithilā. Indeed, their proximity to Magadha has influenced them in a number of ways. The strength of these prejudices can be measured by the fact that even the Gaṅgā, the holiest of holy rivers, is considered impure along her southern bank that forms part of Magadha, and no follower of Brāhmanism, who desires to avoid the tortures of hell after his death through the good offices of Mother Gaṅgā, would think of breathing his last on the Magadhan bank of the river. Even if he dwell in Magadha, in his last hours he must cross over to the northern bank to die with a clear conscience.

According to the Bhagalpur copperplate inscription, King Vigrahapāla married princess Lajjā of the Haihaya ruler of Cedi, modern Jabbalpur in the Central Provinces. Their son, Nārāyaṇapāla, came to the throne early in life because of his father's renunciation. It is to the credit of the young ruler that he steered the ship of sate successfully through the crises which had driven his father from the throne. He deliberately prepared himself intellectually, as well as militarily, to face the difficult task that lay before him. Like all capable rulers, he stablished a firm hold over the territory he governed through "knowledge" as well as through "strength of arms" ('yah prajñayā ca dhanuṣā ca jagadvinīya nityam nyavīviṣadanākulamātmadharmme...' verse 14). He earned the gratitude of his people through his acts of munificence. His charities led them to compare him with Karṇa, King of Aṅga (southern Bhagalpur), the celebrated character in 'Mahābnārata' known for his charities, valour, and integrity of character ('tyāgena yo vyadhatta śraddheyām Aṅgarājakatham' verse 12). In the Amgachhi copperplate inscription[1] of Vigrahapāla III, which is about a century and a half later, Nārāyaṇapāla is said to have gained great fame through his excavation of vast irrigation tanks and his construction of magnificent temples ('toyāśayairjaladhimūlagabhīragarbhair devālayaiśca kulabhūdharatulyakakṣaih, vikhyātakīrttirabhavat', verse 7).

---

(1) IA. Vol. XXI. pp. 97-101. Verse 7.

Whosoever approached him for a gift received from him so much as kept him satisfied for ever and never had again the necessity to approach anyone else for anything.

The inscription on the memorial stone pillar at Badal[1] (district of Dinajpur, Bengal) is of great importance, for it describes the Brāhman family that successively supplied four ministers to the four Pāla kings in the following order:

KING	MINISTER
Dharmapāla (c. 770 A.D. - 810 A.D.)	Gargga
Devapāla (c. 810 A.D. - 850 A.D.)	Darbhapāṇi (Someśvara)
(Vigrahapāla I) Surapāla (c. 850 A.D. - 854 A.D.)	Kedāramiśra
Nārāyaṇapāla (c. 854 A.D. - 908 A.D.)	Guravamiśra

At a first glance, the inscriptions of the Pāla rulers present a difficulty about the implications of the Brāhmanic trends manifest therein. Though issued by ardent followers of Buddhism (Paramasaugata), the inscriptions abound in illustrations drawn from the legend and tradition of the Brāhmans, although these could have been as easily drawn from the Buddhist

---

(1) EI. Vol. II. pp. 160-7.

sources. Not only that, even the un-Buddhistic institutions like the caste-system is declared therein as upheld by these Buddhist rulers. The Badal pillar inscription offers the clue to understanding this apparent anomaly in the situation at the Pāla court. The ministers were Brāhmans. They were also either the authors of the inscriptions or got them drafted and engraved under their own supervision. The king would not say 'no' to the steps taken or suggested by his minister; for the bulk of the population were followers of Brāhmanism and the Brāhman minister was the only bridge between these and the Buddhist ruler. The minister had to be satisfied at any cost short of abdication. A rebel Brāhman minister could easily get a large following by rousing his co-religionists against kings, who could be easily represented to them as usurpers of their glorious heritage and destroyers of the whole edifice of their age-old culture, the Sanātanadharma. The Pālas were prudent enough to realise their position and give in where self-assertion would be disastrous.

It is noteworthy that the Badal pillar inscription is silent as to the previous home, usually mentioned in the contemporary records, of the family of the Brāhman ministers of the Pāla kings. It is possible that this means that they had been long settled in the land (actual district) in which the pillar is located.

The home of the Pālas themselves has been the subject of much controversy. Though Magadha was

the home of Buddhism in the days of the Pālas, as in the centuries from the time of the Buddha himself, and formed the base from where the Pālas ruled their territory extending to all the four surrounding quarters, it is never mentioned as such in the inscriptions. Instead Gauḍa is frequently named, both as a land or the name of a people. In the Badal pillar inscription, the Pāla ruler is called 'Gauḍeśvara' (Lord of Gauḍa), and not Magadheśvara. That may mean that Gauḍa was the home of the Pālas and they liked to be styled 'Gauḍesvara' after their native place, and Magadha, inspite of its political and cultural importance, may have been just a territory annexed to their kingdom. But so far no conclusive evidence has been found to settle the issue either way.

RĀJYAPĀLA
(c. 908 A.D. - 940 A.D.)

From the Bangarh copperplate grant[1] of Mahīpāla I and the Amgachhi copperplate grant[2] of Vigrahapāla III we get nothing more than that Rājyapāla succeeded his father Nārāyaṇapāla; was a powerful king and married Bhāgyadevī the daughter of King Tuṅga of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. That the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king should have offered his daughter in marriage to Rājyapāla shows clearly enough that the Pāla king still retained the prestige of his dynasty.

---

(1) EI. Vol. XIV. pp. 326-8.

(2) IA. Vol. XXI. pp. 97-101.

GOPĀLA II
(c. 940 A.D. - 960 A.D.)

Rājyapāla was succeeded by his son Gopāla II who maintained the traditions of his ancestors, but of whose reign we have no detailed information.

VIGRAHAPĀLA II
(c. 960 A.D. - 988 A.D.)

Vigrahapāla II succeeded Gopāla II. He endeared himself to all through the purity of his nature and his love of art and letters ('Viśvapriyena vimalena kalāmayena yenoditena dalito bhuvanasya tāpah'), ~~according to~~

MAHĪPALA I
(c. 988 A.D. - 1038 A.D.)

The tide now turns swiftly against the Pālas. Their territory is finally shrinking to Gauḍa, which saw the end, as probably the origin too, of the Pālas in the middle of the twelfth century A.D. During the reign of Mahīpāla I, Pāṭaliputra and Mudgagiri, the premier cities in the kingdom, from where so far the administration was carried on and proclamations were issued, seem to have slipped from the hands of the Pālas into those of the Kalacuris of Cedi or the Pratīhāras of Kanauj. The Bangarh copperplate grant[1]

(1) EI. Vol. XIV. pp. 326-8.

of Mahipala I was issued not from Pāṭaliputra or Mudgagiri, but from Vilāsapura (the reading of the name in the plate is as yet only tentative) their 'camp of victory' on the bank of the Gaṅgā. The inscription records the grant of the village, Kuraṭa-pallikā, under Gokalikāmaṇḍala Koṭivarṣaviṣaya and Puṇḍravarddhanabhukti to BhaṭṭaputraKṛṣṇāditya'sarman, son of Bhaṭṭaputra Madhusūdana and grandson of BhaṭṭaputraṚṣikeśa. He was an inhabitant of the village, Cāvaṭī, formerly of the village Hastipada, and was learned in Vedic Ritual, Grammar and Logic and a follower of the Vājasaneya branch of the Yajurveda. He is specified as a descendant of the sage, Parāśara, having as his three greatest ancestors Śakti, Vaśiṣtha and Parāśara. The king made the gift after having undergone the prescribed ablution in the Gaṅgā on the occasion of Viṣuvasaṅkrānti, the vernal equinox.

The dating of this inscription, together with that of the Amgachhi copperplate grant[1] of Mahīpāla's grandson, Vigrahapāla III, presents a problem as to the identification of the system of reckoning followed. While in Mithilā and Magadha today reckoning according to the days of the lunar month is generally followed, in Bengal and Nepāla the reckoning follows the days of the solar month. In the former case the month begins

---

(1) IA. Vol. XXI. pp. 97-101.

with the first day of the dark fortnight and ends with the day of the full moon; in the latter, the year of 365¼ days is divided into 12 months and 6 seasons according to the movement of the sun between the tropics. To bring about a uniformity in the system of reckoning throughout India the difference of about 10 days between the Lunar year of 355 days and the Solar year is adjusted by adding another extra month to the Lunar year every third year.

The 'Saṅkrānti' (literally 'transition') is the stage of transition from one month into another. It is taken as occurring on the first day of the following month in some provinces and on the last day of the previous month in others. In the Bangarh inscription, while the occasion is stated to be 'Viṣuvasaṅkrānti', where 'Viṣuva' is to be taken for the equator and the 'saṅkrānti', the crossing of the equator by the sun on the first or the last day of the month, the date itself is given as the twelfth day of Phalguna in the year I. If we solve the apparent anomaly by suggesting that Phaluguna 12 is the twelfth day of the Lunar month, then the Amgachhi inscription would be dated as Caitra 7, the occasion being the Somagraha (Lunar eclipse), which falls on the day of the full moon, the last day of the fortnight or of the month. There seems to be thus no regular system of reckoning followed in these inscriptions. It might even be that on the 'Viṣuvasaṅkrānti' or

'Somagraha' day, the gift was made according to the method prescribed in the Śāstras, the formal dating of the inscription signifying the accepted fortunate day on which the record was handed over to the beneficiary.

The reference to 'the prescribed ablution in the Gaṅgā' on the occasion of the 'Viṣuva-saṅkrānti' in the Bangarh inscription is parallelled by another to a similar performance in the Amgachhi inscription. Here the influence of the Brāhmans is clearly demonstrated. The difficulties of the Pāla rulers were daily increasing now because of the pressure from the west, now dominated by the Pratīhāras of Kanauj. This external pressure, instead of inspiring loyalty to the king, encouraged certain influential sections within his territory to rise in revolt against him and assert their independence. Mahīpāla I is, however, stated to have brought the rebels under subjugation and re-established his firm hold over his ancestral territory:

"Hatasakalavipakṣah saṅgare bāhudarpād
anadhikṛtaviluptam rājyamāsādya pitṛyam.

Nihitacaraṇapadmo bhūbhṛtam mūrdhni tasmād
abhavad avanipālah Śrī-Mahīpāladevah." (1)

---

(1) Bangarh copperplate Ins. Verse 12: (EI. XIV. 326-8)
Amgachhi copperplate Ins. Verse 11: (IA. XXI. 97-101)

THE CHOLA INVASION
(A.D. 1021 - 23)

When Mahīpāla I succeeded his father Vigrahapāla II about 988 A.D., the prospects of the dynasty were undoubtedly gloomy. He, however, succeeded in restoring the fortunes of his family to a considerable extent. According to his Bangarh grant, he recovered his paternal kingdom which was 'anadhi-kṛta-vilupta' (i.e. snatched away by people who had no claim to it). The same inscription mentions that he was in occupation of Varendra (north Bengal) in the year 9 of his reign.

Rājendra Chola I (A.D. 1012-44) of the south led an expedition into the territory of Mahīpāla I in the year 1021 A.D., which lasted until the year 1021 A.D.[1] The object of this expedition was to bring, by force of arms, the sacred water of the Gaṅgā, which was to be used for purifying his own land. According to the Tiruvalangadu plates, the Chola general seized "Tandabutti,... (land which he acquired) after having destroyed Dharmapāla (in) a hot battle; Takkaṇalāḍam whose fame reached (all) directions, (and which he occupied) after having forcibly attacked Raṇasūra; Vangāla-Deśa, where the rainwater never stopped, (and from which) Govindachandra fled, having

---

(1) V.A. Smith: Early History of India, Oxford 1924, p. 487.
HB. pp. 136 ff.
AHI. p. 263 (genealogy of the Cholas, c. 846 - c. 1279 A.D.)
K.A. Nilakanta Sastri: The Cholas. Vol. I Madras 1935, pp. 247 ff.

descended (from his) male elephant; elephants of rare strength, women and treasure, (which he seized) after having been pleased to frighten the mighty Mahīpāla on the field of hot battle with (the noise of the) conches (got) from the deep sea; Uttiralāḍam (on the shore of) the expansive ocean (producing) pearls; and the Gaṅgā whose waters bearing fragrant flowers dashed against the bathing places."[1]

Taṇḍabutti, Takkaṇalāḍam, Uttiralāḍam, and Vangāla-Desa in the above passage denote respectively Daṇḍabhukti, Dakṣiṇarāḍha, Uttara-Rāḍhā and Vaṅgāla.

NAYAPĀLA

(c. 1038 A.D. - 1055 A.D.)

Mahīpala was succeeded by his son Nayapāla. According to the Amgachhi copperplate inscription (verse 12) of his son and successor Vigrahapāla III, he was a man of cultured tastes and sweet manners, was loved by his people and maintained his sway over his vassal chiefs.

VIGRAHAPĀLA III

(c. 1055 A.D. - 1070 A.D.)

Vigrahapala III is the last of the Pālas, whose official documents in the form of copperplate

---

(1) HB. p. 138

grants have been so far discovered. The later Pālas who maintained their dwindling power up to the middle of the twelfth century A.D. either did not issue any such documents on account of their preoccupation by their struggles with the rising Senas in Bengal and the Candelas and Pratīhāras in the west, or if they did the records must still be buried underground, awaiting the spade of a chance cultivator or archaeologist.

The Amgachhi copperplate grant of Vigrahapāla III was issued from his 'camp of victory' at Haradhāma on the bank of the Gaṅgā in the year 12 of his reign. It records the grant of a village in Brāhmaṇigrāma maṇḍala, Koṭivarṣa viṣaya, Puṇḍravarddhana bhukti to the Brāhman Khoduladevaśarmā, son of Mahopādhyāya Arkadeva, grandson of Padmavanadeva, learned in Vedānta philosophy; inhabitant of the village Chhattā, formerly of Matsya and Kroḍañci; learned in Vedic Ritualism, Grammar and Logic; follower of the Kauthumī branch of the Sāmaveda; Harisabrahmacārin (the expression Harīsabrahmacāriṇe should mean 'the follower of the caraṇa or sub-branch of the Śākhā or branch of a Veda known as Hari, but as we are not so far aware of the existence of any such 'caraṇa' today or in the past, we leave the expression as it is); descendant of the sage Śāṇḍilya, having Śāṇḍilya, Asita and Devala as his three greatest ancestors. The gift, like the one by his grandfather Mahīpāla I in the Bangarh copperplate, was made in the name of

the Buddha, after having undergone the prescribed ablution in the Gaṅgā on the occasion of the Lunar Eclipse, the occasion in the case of Mahīpāla I, having been, as we have seen, the 'Viṣuva-saṅkrānti'. It is difficult to imagine how far a devout follower of Lord Buddha, King Vigrahapāla III or his grandfather King Mahīpāla I would have relished observing in detail the formalities of the Brāhmanic religion in order to keep his people satisfied and loyal. If it was done with conviction, the character of the king gains in catholicity, though at some sacrifice of logical consistency in behaviour; if, on the other hand, it was inspired by the desire to appease elements of doubtful loyalty among his people, the struggle between the inclinations of faith and the demands of the state-policy may well be imagined.

Haradhāma, like Vilāsapura in the Bangarh copperplate, still remains to be identified. As during the reigns of Vigrahapāla III and his grandfather Mahīpāla I, who issued their grants from these two places on the banks of the Gaṅgā, the Pāla territory was shrinking towards the east, so that Pāṭaliputra and Mudgagiri seem to have been abandoned as the chief cities in the kingdom. We may conclude that Haradhāma and Vilāsapura were situated somewhere east of Mudgagiri, between it and Gauḍa. And if we take the etymology of the name Haradhāma (the home of Hara or Śiva: Hara = Śiva, dhāman = home) as of any help in solving the problem, we must look for

a place on the Gaṅgā noted for its shrine of Lord Śiva. Modern Sultanganj with its temple of Śiva, locally known as Ajagaibīnātha, situated on a prominent rock in the middle of the Gaṅgā may well provide a clue to the solution. The place is rich in the remains of the past and is still considered to be one of the chief temples of Śiva in Bihar.

The language of the inscriptions we have examined here is Sanskrit. Though each of these is a compilation of passages by authors separated from one another in time and space, they all bear the marks of the Gauḍī style which took its name from Gauḍa and is known for its verbosity and high-flown imagery, difficult to grasp for the average reader. Many of the passages are still obscure and present great difficulties even to specialists. These difficulties are, however, due as much to the artificiality of expression and the long-drawn compounds of not unoften incoherent concepts, as to the use of technical terms now no longer in vogue nor tracebale in contemporary literary productions from which their meaning might be gathered. The deviations from the rules of syntax and orthography are too numerous to be called mistakes. If we set them against the passages from the Buddhist Sanskrit literature of the same age, we might well conclude that at least in circles where Buddhists had any influence, grammatical accuracy was not considered as one of the primary concerns of the writer.

Inspite of these pit-falls, however, the inscriptions are not lacking in poetry. Not only the laudatory verses in the beginning and the didactic ones at the end, but even the narrative passages in between frequently recall to the reader's mind pictures of nature. We recognise snow-capped Himālaya rising high up in the heavens to the north, wearing each morning and evening the splendour of the rising and setting sun, the heavenly river Gaṅgā descending upon earth to wash the sins of millions of stricken humanity and take them up in her lap to the abode of the blessed ones, the vast stretches of green fields, forests and hills sending out fragrant breezes to the farthest corners of the land, the dark clouds bearing in their moisture the hope of the peasant, the birds and the animals of the Indian countryside, ~~of Man.~~

THE SENAS(1)

The name of the Pāla rulers of Magadha and Gauḍa was still invoked in distant Benares as late as A.D. 1026. In the following decades, the Pālas entered into close relations with Lakshmi Karṇa, the King of Chedi. The passing away of Karṇa almost coincided with a fresh disaster that fell upon the Magadha and Gauḍa kingdom. A local rising in North Bengal drove the Pālas from Varendrī. The power of the house of Dharmapāla was restored by Rāmapāla, it is true, mainly with the assistance of his Rāṣṭrakūṭa

---

(1) Smith, V.A.: Early History of India, Oxford 1924. pp. 418 ff.
AHI. pp. 187-188.

relations. But the restored Kingdom had no long lease of life left, being ultimately overthrown in Bengal by Vijayasena, scion of a family that came from the Deccan. The struggle between indigenous and foreign military chieftains in Bengal ended in the victory of the latter.

The conqueror founded a new line, that of the Senas. The ancestors of the new king came from Karṇāṭa in the Deccan. They established a principality in Western Bengal which came into prominence under Sāmanta Sena. Sāmanta Sena seems to have retained some connection with his southern compatriots. After him came Hemanta Sena. Vijaya Sena, son of Hemanta Sena, allied himself with the illustrious family of the Sūras and founded his own independent dynasty. He vanquished the King of Gauda, who was apparently of Pāla lineage, and the neighbouring princes of North Bihar, Assam and Orissa. He also laid the foundation of the city of Vijayapura in Western Bengal, which became the capital city of the Senas.

The son and successor of Vijaya Sena was Ballāla Sena, a name famous in Bengali legend as the reputed founder of 'Kulīnism', which survives until today. He is also credited with the authorship of two notable monks, the 'Dānasāgara' and the 'Adbhut-sāgara'.

Ballāla Sena's son, Laksmaṇa Sena, probably began to rule in A.D. 1178-79. He distinguished himself as a conqueror and a patron of learning. He distinguished himself as a conqueror and a patron of learning. He claims to have pushed his conquests as far as the southern sea, reduced Kāmarūpa to subjection and vanquished the King of Benares who was no other than the Gahaḍavāla, king of Kanauj. Among the poets who graced his Court, the most eminent were Jayadeva, author of the 'Gītagovinda', and Dhoyī, author of the 'Pavanadūta'. The Senas were ousted from Bengal by the Muslim invaders from the west in the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D. Brāhman domination was at an end.

THE RĀṢTRAKŪṬAS

Something must be added as to the Rāṣtrakūṭas, the allies by marriage of the Pālas. Vincent Smith writes as follows concerning them: "In the middle of the eighth century A.D., Dantiḍurga, a chieftain of the ancient, and apparently indigenous, Rāṣtrakūṭa clan, fought his way to the front, and overthrew Kīrtivarman II Chalukya, the son and successor of Vikramāditya II. The main branch of the Chalukyas now became extinct and the sovereignty of the Deccan passed to the Rāṣtrakūṭas, in whose hands it remained for nearly two centuries and a quarter".(1)

---

(1) V.A. Smith: Early History of India. Oxford, 1924. p. 443.

The Rāṣṭrakūṭas were patrons of learning, and one king, Amoghavarṣa I, was an author of repute. They were also great builders, and their second king, Krishna I, uncle of Dantidurga, executed the famous Kailāsa temple at Ellora. The chief interest of Rāṣṭrakūṭa history in the days of Krishna I's successors centres round their struggle with the Pratīhāras of Kanauj, as that of the Chālukyas of Vātāpī centred round their conflict with the Pallavas of Kānchi. Dhruva, younger son of Krishna I defeated Vatsarāja Pratīhāra and expelled a Gauḍa king, probably Dharmapāla, from the Gangetic Doab. Under Govinda III, son and successor of Dhruva, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas became well nigh invincible They exacted tribute from the Pallavas of Kānchī and installed one of their princes on the throne of south Gujerat. Nāgabhaṭa II, son of Vatsarāja, sustained defeats at their hands. Dharmapāla of Bengal and his vassal, Chakrāyudha, are said to have offered their submission to them. The next king, Amoghavarṣa I, had a very long reign (c. 815-877 A.D.). He removed his capital to Mānyakheta or Malkhed in the Nizam's dominions. He could not successfully emulate his father's exploits in the far north as he was involved in a struggle with the Chalukyas of Vengi at the months of the Godāvarī and the Krishnā. But the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in his time succeeded in checking the southern progress of Bhoja I and Kanauj. He also attached the more important rulers of the far south to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa interest by marriage alliances. Indra III, great-grandson of Amoghavarṣa I, finished

the work by his illustrious ancestors, Dhruva and Govinda III, by inflicting a crushing defeat on Mahīpāla, the Pratīhāra king of Kanauj, and taking temporary possession of his capital city. His nephew Krishna III, was the last great king of the line. His dominions extended from Jura in Baghelkhand to Tanjore in the Kaveri valley. In 973, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty was overthrown by Taila II, a feudatory of Krishna III, who claimed descent from the early Chalukyas of Vātāpī.(1)

---

(1) AHI. pp. 179-80.

CHAPTER IV

THE PHILOSOPHER

Philosphy and religion being intimately connected with each other, it is difficult to separate one from the other. It is the quality of current philosophy that decides the form of contemporary religion. The finer the thought, the more universal the form of religion. The poorer the thought, the narrower the religion, overlaid with bigotry and superstition. Knowledge and faith, as the proper subjects of philosophy and religion, are respectively two phases of the mind of man.

Two broad ways of thinking and believing existed in Mithilā and Magadha in the beginning of the eighth century A.D., Brāhmanism and Buddhism. Each of them had centuries of history behind it, centuries of hopes of the cessation of human suffering and the attainment of happiness in a better world. Throughout the centuries millions of men and women, generation after generation, had looked to Brāhman priests and Buddhist teachers for the promised freedom from suffering which never came.

Long before the advent of the Pālas, Brāhmanism had accepted non-Vedic gods and goddesses in its pantheon. The transcendental philosophy of Vedāntic monism was beyond the comprehension of the

mass of the people, not only because of its profundity, but also because of its failure to provide a satisfactory synthesis. Vedic ritualism, itself, with all its ramifications of 'yajñas' (sacrifices) and hosts of deities was confined to select paṇḍits who still regarded the Vedas as the final word on the destiny of man. Some of the old Vedic deities that were retained in the revised pantheon were given new qualifications, viz. Viṣṇu, Sarasvatī, Varuṇa etc. As against these, Śiva, Durgā, Gaṇeśa and Lakṣmī were among the new gods and goddesses that made their appearance early in the first four centuries of the Christian era.

The age of the Pālas brought the human mind face to face with the extremes of the experience of life, renunciation and greed, valour and terror, compassion and revenge. Opportunity for all was there. It was for man to make his choice. And while the chiefs and kings were impelled by ambition to wage war on one another, there were the great teachers, dominated by Saṅkara, who upheld the ideals of renunciation, and the King Vigrahapāla I who could have lived in affluence if he had so willed, but gave it up for a recluse. The literature and sculpture of the age bear ample evidence of the conflict of such extremes of behaviour. The best, and the worst in human nature emerge under such stresses.

The conception of the different gods and goddesses of Brāhmanism and of Buddhism was, of course, the outcome of the prevailing mentality. Man in his affliction seeks a god stronger than his own vanquished self, more compassionate than any living human being, who would protect him against the daily onslaughts from a hundred quarters that left him poor, hungry and destitute. Viṣṇu or Śiva are such gods. The Buddhists had their counterpart in Buddha, Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya and Mañjuśrī. It was not long, however, before these master deities failed to satisfy man's needs, and he was compelled to turn to numerous goddesses. Durgā, Kālī and Cāmuṇḍā of Brāhmanism and Tārā in her numerous forms of Ugratārā, Vajratārā, Mahāpratisarā and Bhṛkuṭī of Buddhism presented the saving deity as the ideal Mother, the wielder of the primeval energy of life in its entirety, armed with weapons of destruction to strike those down that might raise their hands against her human children.

Though Brāhmanism and Buddhism developed on parallel lines and on parallel territories, too, on either side of the Gaṅgā, there were certain characteristics that distinguished Buddhism from its rival, Brāhmanism. The high idealism of universal brotherhood and self-sacrifice for the happiness of all with which Buddha started his mission still guided his followers, face to face with even darker days than

the Buddha himself had to contend with. Medieval Brāhmanism by comparison with Buddhism must be put on an altogether lower level. The patience and perseverance that Buddhists in Magadha and South Mithilā showed during the days of the Pālas in face of provocation from the Brāhmans was well worthy of the Great Founder of the Noble Eightfold Path.

During the centuries (700 A.D. - 1100 A.D.) under review, the Mahāyāna pantheon of Buddhism came to its fullest development in Magadha. It was "based on a conception of the Ādi-Buddha and Adi-Prajñā, also called Prajñā-Pāramitā, the universal father and universal mother. From this pair emanate the five Dhyānī-Buddhas (Pañca-Tathāgatas) viz. Vairocana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi, to which is sometimes added a sixth, the Vajrasattva. They are obsorbed in yoga, but each of them has an active counterpart called Bodhisattva and a human (Mānushī) Buddha. We are now living in the age of Dhyānī-Buddha Amitābha, the corresponding Bodhisattva and Buddha being Avalokiteśvara (Lokanātha) and Gautama. In addition to Avalokiteśvara two other Bodhisattvas, Mañjuśrī and Maitreya, occupy a prominent position in the Mahāyāna pantheon. Of the goddesses the most important are the Tārās of five different colours". (1)

---

(1) Banerjea, J.N.: HB. p. 467.

The central motive of Mahāyāna was compassion for suffering humanity. It aimed at making the utmost sacrifice for them in order to end their misery. So it was that the central figures in the Mahāyāna pantheon was Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva who through his virtue was entitled to Nirvāṇa but who refused it until all living beings entered the blessed stall before him.(1)

The emergence of such a conception of the deity was latent in the original spirit of Buddhism, itself, and was still preserved by monks of high integrity of character at Nālandā, Vikramaśilā and other lesser monasteries. The Buddhists had the patronage of the Pāla rulers no doubt; but this patronage did not amount to as much as royal patronage generally does in India. For the Pālas were themselves hard pressed. The Brāhmans, unreconciled to Buddhism at home and the aggressive rulers on the borders of their territory, never gave them any real peace. They had to do without a coinage system, one of the basic factors that go to make a stable government. They had no permanent headquarters for their administration. In such a state of affairs, their protection was not of much help to Buddhism. Grateful always for whatever benefactions it received from high quarters, it managed, however, to persist somehow.

---

(1) Bhattacharyya, B.: SM. Vol. II. pp. xxiv-xxv.

While such state of disorder did reveal qualities of head and heart in a minority of Buddhists, the rank and file drifted away still further from the upright way of old. The people came to be divided culturally into three classes: Therewere the monks of learning and character who carried on the old traditions of service and sacrifice. Secondly, there were the masses who put their faith in numerous personal gods and goddesses both Brāhman and Buddhist, whom they worshipped in various ways in the hope of release from a life of misery. And lastly there were the Vajrayānists among the Buddhists, with their counterparts in the Tāntrikas among the followers of Brāhmanism.

The Bhikṣus and Saṁnyāsins on the one hand and the followers of Tantras in Buddhism and Brāhmanism on the other, presented the two extremes of mental development in the society of the times. While the former kept resolutely to the old path of service and renunciation, the latter lost all confidence both in Buddhism and the host of professedly compassionate gods and goddesses. The Tāntric practices, now came to the fore, were based upon lower levels of primitive psychology and the practices that followed have brought on these followers of the Tantras the indignation of modern historians concerned more with moral standards of judgment than with the actualities of history.

The followers of the Tantras were conscious of the baseness[1] of the practices they indulged in. They were never looked upon with favour by the majority of the people, and were, therefore, driven to provide a justification of their new cult. In course of time, a whole philosophy was constructed, complete in itself and modelled on the best known schools of the time, especially the Vedānta of the school of Śaṅkara. The sexual practices that defied any clear philosophical exposition were clothed in a mystic language claimed to be inspired by the highest spiritual powers, which, if properly understood and used, would put Destiny in the hands of Man. Those doctrines, however, were never formulated intelligibly. The Destiny of Man remained as intractable as ever.

Throughout the vast existing literature on the Tantra, there is evident a constant attempt to justify and defend doctrines that appeared to the mass of people as devoid of any moral basis. The subterfuge failed. And now, while no one bothers any longer about the long philosophical disquisistions, which clothe the unpalatable tantric practices, the five 'makāras' mithuna,(sex) madya,(drink) matsya, (fish) māṅsa,(meat)and śmaśāna,(the cremation ground) are all that is remembered of Tantra.

---

(1) Bhattacharyya, B.: SM. Vol. II. pp. xxx-xxxi.

Buddhism and Brāhmanism in the hands of the philosophers and conscientious householders followed their own different channels, which, however, in the Tantra mingled together and formed a single unsavoury stream.(1) Analysis and differentiation only come with the development of intellect. When in face of the danger and distress intellectual effort fails, it is instinct to which Man returns, as to a refuge. That is the source of life itself. There is no specification here. Where the instincts are concerned all life is one, and reason is lost in the general morals. The emergence of the Tantra was the visible effect of thedecoy of the orthodox religion.

while Buddhism and Brāhmanism declined alike, the final dissolution of the former only came at the end of the twelfth century A.D. There has been a wide difference of views about the causes of the elimination of Buddhism from the face of Mithilā and Magadha, as eventually from India as a whole. The sexual aberrations and corruption of various kinds implicit in the cult of Tantra have been cited by many as the sole cause of the downfall of Buddhism. It is stated that "Buddhism lost its hold on the people of India not so much because its enemies were powerful, but also on account of its own weakness. The word

---

(1) Winternitz, M.: 'History of Indian Literature' Vol. II. pp. 398-9.

'bhikṣu', in later days, was a bye-word of reproach, and the idea that the Buddhists were extremely sensual and licentious had been gaining ground in India for a long time."(1)

There are two objections to such a view: Firstly, the charge of licentiousness against the Buddhists of Magadha is misplaced; there is no evidence for it in the vast number of Buddhist sculptures of the period or in the paintings or texts of the illuminated manuscripts prepared at Nālandā and taken to Nepal by the Buddhist refugees when the Muslim invaders appeared in Magadha.(2) This view seems to be based mainly on the confusion of the Tantric practices in Magadha under the Pālas with the sexual perversity that came to have full play among the Buddhist followers of the cult in Nepal at a much later stage. That the ancient manuscripts from Magadha were discovered along with the later sculptures and manuscripts of Nepal, itself, had much to do with the formation of this erroneous impression

---

(1) Sastri, Haraprasad: 'Discovery of Living Buddhism in Bengal'
Calcutta. 1897. pp. 7-8.

(2) B.H. Hodgson: a biography by W.W. Hunter.
London. 1896.

B.H. Hodgson: 'Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet'.
London. 1874.

abour Buddhism, as practised in Magadha. Secondly, assuming that the charge of corruptions against Buddhism is true, why should Buddhism alone have been subjected to extinction, when Brāhmanism itself was in no way less guilty of the same practices ?

In the statement we have quoted above and objected to, acknowledgement is, however, made of the existence of 'powerful enemies' of Buddhism. The passage that follows denies this fact: "Buddhism died a natural death in India. It is an invention of the interested to say that fanatic priests fought Buddhism out of existence. It is true that Kumārila and Śaṅkara criticised Buddhistic doctrines, but the resistance offered by Brāhmanism to Buddhism is the natural resistance of an old organisation to a new development which came to have nothing really new. The violent extermination of Buddhism in India is legendary. Buddhism and Brāhmanism approached each other so much that for a time they were confused and ultimately became one. Slow absorption and silent indifference, and not priestly fanaticism and methodical destruction, are the causes of the fall of Buddhism."(1) It is strange that the author's statement, as it stands, should have come long after the publication of 'Śaṅkaravijayah'(2) a biography

---

(1) Radhakrishnan, S.: 'Indian Philosophy' Vol. I. London 1923. pp. 607-8.

(2) Calcutta. 1868.

of Śaṅkara by his own disciple Ānandagiri (c. 800 A.D.) and 'Śaṅkaradigvijayah'[1], another biography of the same philosopher by Vidyāraṇya of the fourteenth century A.D. In these works the authors, devout followers of Brāhmanism, refer with a sense of pride and exultation to the bloody wars against Buddhists, in which Brāhman priests and kṣatriya rulers combined to root out Buddhism from Indian soil. The charge that the followers of Brāhmanism adopted violent methods against the Buddhists is here deemed as an 'invention of the interested'. What interest could Ānandagiri and Vidyāraṇya have in giving currency to the story of armed attacks upon Buddhism, except that of their own faith and sects ? Little did they realise that they were leaving in their accounts of massacres of Buddhists at the hands of the members of their own faith a perpetual reproach against their religion. It ill accords with our professed scientific outlook to try to conceal the ugly facts of history.

To talk of 'natural resistance' and 'silent indifference' to the same object and at the same time is a logical inconsistency which the author quoted seems unconscious of. Because of his bias in favour of his own faith which, he feared, would suffer in the eyes of modern critics, if the charge of violence were proved against it, he speaks of 'natural

---

(1) Poona. 1915.

resistance' as if it excluded violence. Persuasion even in ordinary matters of family affairs comes in only at a far later stage in the evolution of human morals. The 'slow absorption' ofmamy Buddhistic practices by Brāhmanism is no proof of the latter's charity. It could not, even if it had so willed, have resisted the process of cultural assimilation. When two ideas or ways of life come together, they are bound to influence each other. That is the law of Nature. Such cultural assimilation has taken place in India before and after the events under discussion - between the Aryans and the Dravidians in the age of the Vedas, and between the Indians on the one hand, and the Arabs, the Turks, the Afghans, the Persians, and the Moghuls on the other, after 1200 A.D. And such 'assimilation' or 'absorption' has always followed violent strife between the peoples concerned.

However, a religion of the magnitude of Buddhism cannot entirely die in the land of its origin. The labours of Haraprasad Sastri and others have made it clear that Buddhism did not entirely disappear but lived, and is still living, in a disguised form in Bengal. This fact has also been used to contradict statements concerning the Buddhist persecutions.(1) But the evidence of surviving traces of Buddhism was only to be expected and connat be used to deny the facts as stated by Brāhman authors.

---

(1) De, S.K.: HB. p. 350. foot-note 7.

Driven underground, probably in the course of time, Buddhism would have re-emerged. But as Bhattacharyya observes, "by the time a reaction could set in, the Muhammadans were already up and doing, and with one stroke of their sword, purged India for good of these horrible priests of immorality and lawlessness by killing every monk they could meet on the street and by looting the rich monasteries which were the strongholds of mysterious and highly objectionable hosts of priesthood engaged in still more objectionable rites and practices."(1) His account betrays an unbalanced fanaticism against Buddhism, as in the other opinions quoted. However, it is clear that the Muslim invasion was an end, as well as a beginning. When by the end of the twelfth century A.D. the Muhammadan invaders came to Magadha and conquered it after massacring the Buddhist monks and destroying their monasteries headed by the great university of Nālandā itself, all they did was to complete the work of the Brāhmans.

2.

KUMĀRILA BHATTA

(c. 780 A.D.)

About the beginning of the eighth century A.D. Dakṣiṇarāḍhā (south-western Bengal) along with Mithilā formed the centre of Brāhmanic activities in north-eastern India. This area stretches continuously from

---

(1) Bhattacharyya, B.: SM. Vol. II. p. xxiii.

Nepal in the north to the district of Medinipur across the Gaṅgā in West Bengal. In the days of Harṣa, it formed the eastern fringe of his empire. Being comparatively distant from the main highways of India, this region has enjoyed greater peace than any other in the land. It was the geographical isolation of their land that enabled the Brāhmans to keep to the ancient Vedic ways, when the rest of the country had fallen under Buddhist influence, cultural as well as political.

The Mīmāṁsakas were known throughout India, including Nālandā, as the Prācyas (easterners).(1) The eastern provinces of Mithilā and Dakṣiṇarādhā because of their comparative seclusion, especially provided an ideal ground for the maintenance of conservatism. It is of interest to note that whenever in India Brāhmanism gained royal patronage, as in the days of the Guptas, Mithilā ceased to be of importance and other more centrally situated places became prominent. We first hear of Janaka and Yājñavalkya in the later vedic age, when Mithilā was still a newly colonised territory of the Aryans and the land beyond it towards the east and south across the Gaṅgā was held by the Dravidians. After that, until we come to Maṇḍana, Vācaspati and Udayana in the days of the Pālas, we hear of no great names in the history of

---

(1) Jha, Ganganatha: 'Tattvasaṁgraha' Eng. Trans. Vol. II. Baroda 1939. p. viii.

this region, except another Yājñavalkya, the Law-giver who lived about the beginning of the Christian era.

Kumārila was born in the 8th century in Dakṣiṇarāḍhā of an orthodox Brāhman family. Tradition has it that early in his life, he came to cherish the ambitition of ridding the land of Buddhists. We do not know for certain whether, at that stage, there was any intention of violence in his hopes. It can only be asserted that, born in a family where ritual and sacrifices, including those of animals, were a common feature, he may not have excluded it altogether from his plans. Brāhmanic ritualism had no place for non-injury to animals, which came to be understood as the sole concern of the Buddhists. Those among the Brāhmans, therefore, who were genuinely convinced by the Vedāntic doctrine, saw no scope for themselves in the Brāhmanic fold and joined the Buddhist order. This trend started with Mahākāśyapa Maudgalyāyana and others in the days of the Buddha himself, and continued up to the last days of Buddhism in India at the end of the twelfth century A.D.

Kumārila, however, decided to learn the secret of the growth of Buddhism, in order that he might better plan his attacks against the Order. He joined the Saṅgha and mastered the 'Tripiṭakas', with the whole of the later literature based on them.

He then revealed his motive and left the Saṅgha. Ānandagiri, the author of 'Śaṅkaravijayah' and a personal disciple of Śaṅkarācārya, who was a generation after Kumārila, states that Kumārila persuaded King Sudhanvā, who is not identified as yet, to plan a general massacre of the Buddhists. Later on, in his old age, however, Kumārila is said to have changed his attitude towards the Buddhists. It seems that he was deeply moved by the mass murder of the followers of Buddhism and came to repent of what he had done. The remorse so overwhelmed him that, as the only possible expiation of his great sin of causing the destruction of those at whose feet he had sat as a pupil to learn the ways of the Tathāgata, he decided to end his life by burning. It was somewhere in Orissa that he prepared his own pyre. He was sitting half-consumed by the flames when Śaṅkara appeared before him, and, it is said, requested him to spare his life and live to write 'Vārttika' (commentary in verse) on the 'Bhāṣya' on the Brahmasūtra and the Upaniṣads, which Śaṅkara himself had prepared. Kumārila spoke to him of his half-burned state and expressed his inability to accede to his request. Śaṅkara offered to restore him to his normal health, but he refused the offer and remained in the flame which reduced his frame to ashes. The theory of a mere 'wordy warfare'[1] between Buddhism and Brāhmanism

---

(1) supra p. ~~118~~.

or the one of 'the slow absorption'[1] of Buddhism by Brāhmanism meets another contradiction in the fact that the great Vihāra at Buddhagaya is still in the possession of a Hindu Mahanth. Moreover, the numerous votive stupas within the precincts of the Vihāra have been replaced by 'Śivaliṅgas'. How did this change in the ownership of the principal surviving Buddhist monastery in India come about ? Can it be imagined to have been the result of a 'wordy warfare' or a process of 'slow absorption' ?

Had Kumārila come a century earlier than he did, it would have been tempting to identify his patron, King Sudhanvā, with Śaśāṅka of Gauḍa, the contemporary of Harṣa (606-648 A.D.). Śaśāṅka's measures against Buddhism were similar to those of the patron of Kumārila. It is possible the name is fictitious and the author of the 'Śaṅkaravijayah' may have had in mind the exploits of Śaśāṅka when he was describing Kumārila's campaign against Buddhism. As it is difficult to imagine a campaign of that scale being carried out without royal support, he may have created a character in Sudhanvan on the model of Śaśāṅka. It was unfortunately only too common with authors in those days not to bother about the accuracy of dates or names. For instance, if a king had a poet of merit at his court, he would be

---

(1) supra p. 110

named as Kālidāsa and then only a few decades later others would refer to him as the author of the Abhijñānaśakuntalam and the Raghuvaṁśam. So much so, that up to the time of King Bhoja of Dhārā about half a dozen poets had been given the name 'Kālidāsa' and are referred to as a single author, even by the author of the Bhojprabandha in the thirteenth century A.D. If this Sudhanvan, however, be an historic figure, we must wait for the discovery of further missing dynasties in the history of that part of India, before we can arrive at a clear assessment of his role in the social and political affairs of the times.

However, tradition makes it clear that Kumārila was an elder contemporary of Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana (c. 800 A.D.). Maṇḍana according to Ānandagiri, was the husband of Kumārila's sister (bhaginībharttā). Mādhavācāryya in his Śaṅkara-digvijayah speaks of him as the pupil of Kumārila.(1) As there is no contradiction between the two statements, Maṇḍana may be taken as having been both pupil and brother-in-law of Kumārila.

The discovery and decipherment of the inscriptions of the Pāla rulers of Magadha and the adjoining territories during the centuries that saw

---

(1) Kaviraj, Gopinath: 'Tantravārtika'. Vol. I. Calcutta. 1924. p. x.

the rise of Kumārila, Śaṅkara, Maṇḍana, Vācaspati, Udayana, Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, Ratnākara and Dīpaṅkara Śrijñāna, however, do help us to understand something of the mind of these philosophers.

From the inscriptions[1] we know that Dharmapāla, the second ruler of the Pāla dynasty, ruled at least for 32 years from c. 770 A.D. to c. 810 A.D. The same sources, also, reveal that he was a powerful king who subdued his adversaries and extended his dominion far in all directions. Kumārila must have been his contemporary, probably in his later years, but it is possible he was alive before Gopāla assumed the kingship (c. 750 A.D.) and ended the century-old anarchy that followed the death of Harṣa in 648 A.D.

The full implication of the term 'anarchy' ('Matsyanyāya') used in the Khalimpur copperplate inscription[2] of Dharmapāla with reference to the period that preceded the rule of Gepāla is fully intelligible if Kumārila's merciless campaign against Buddhism is accepted as the origin of the use of the phrase. Kumārila was naturally encouraged by the general anarchy to seize the opportunity of destroying the Buddhist minority. He secured the support of the

---

(1) supra pp. 45-99.

(2) supra p. 51 ff.; EI. Vol. IV. pp. 243 ff.

chief, Sudhanvan and started the planned massacre of the Buddhists. Before, however, he could accomplish his object, Gopāla the Buddhist was accepted as king, and the period of his dominance was over. We have no definite record of his reactions to the establishment of the new regime in Magadha, Mithilā, Daksiṇarādhā and Gauḍa, but his dwindling influence among the people under a Buddhist king may well be imagined. Deserted by most of his erstwhile disciples, he was now struck with remorse and made his way southward into the forests. More than a thousand years before him, another man of similar spirit and ambition, Aśoka also came to reflected on his past actions on the same spot. It was after his victory over the Kaliṅgas in 261 B.C. when the sight of the thousands killed and wounded and many more rendered homeless and unprotected, converted the Mauryan king. Like Kumārila, he was filled with remorse, but it was in his hour of victory that opened out another way of life for him, the way to making relentless efforts for relieving mankind and the rest of living beings of their longstanding suffering, ~~is~~ unlike Kumārila, who was tormented by the frustration of his plans and in his old age now saw all doors closed before him. The results of their actions sent the two men in opposite directions, Aśoka to a new life of piety under the inspiration and guidance of the Buddhist Order, and Kumārila, a thousand years later, to the desperation of self-appointed death.

By training, a believer in the theory of causation, Kumārila naturally sought for the cause of his failure. Throughout his life he had upheld the infallible authority of the Vedas, the source, to him, of all knowledge and wisdom, the eternal, immutable Word from which sprang the Deity and the hosts of gods and goddesses. They and not God were the highest reality to him. And next to them were the Gurus , the teachers. It is of great pscychological interest that tradition should assert that Kumarila's suicide was an act of atonement for his treatment of his Buddhist teachers.

MANDANA and SAṄKARA

(c. 800 A.D.)

No average Brāhman in Mithilā has ever doubted Maṇḍana's being a Maithila Brāhman. 'Maṇḍana-Vācaspati' is spoken of as if the two were twin brothers. However, the attribution is disputed and Maṇḍana has been accepted as a native of Māhiṣmatī on the Narmadā in western India by a large number of scholars, including the great Maithila scholar himself, the late Dr. Ganganatha Jha.[1]

---

(1) Jha, Ganganatha: 'Bhāvanāviveka' of Maṇḍana. Part II. Benares. 1923. p. 4 (intro.)

The belief that Māhiṣmatī on the Narmadā was the home of Maṇḍanamisra is based on the following verse in the 'Śaṅkaradigvijayah' of Mādhava Vidyāraṇya:

"Atha pratasthe Bhagavān Prayāgāt
Tan Maṇḍanam paṇḍitam āśu jetum.
Gacchan khasṛtyā puram āluloke
Māhiṣmatīm Maṇḍanamaṇḍitām sah." (1)

Vidyāraṇya, philosopher and politician, lived in the middle of the fourteenth century A.D. and is said to have been the moving spirit behind the foundation of the kingdom of Vijayanagara. In his 'Śaṅkaradigvijayah', his biography of the philosopher Śaṅkara, the contemporary of Maṇḍanamisra, Vidyāraṇya, however, contrary to what would be expected of him as a politician, shows an extreme lack of correct ideas of the geographical positions of different places in India. We shall deal with this when discussing Śaṅkara's itinerary in detail. Anyway, in the verse quoted above he simply mentions that Śaṅkara went from Prayāga, flying through the air to Māhiṣmati, the place where Maṇḍana lived. He does not mention the direction of Maṇḍana's home from Prayāga or the name of the Narmadā itself. Māhiṣmatī on the Narmadā as the city of Kārtyavīrya Arjuna is commonly mentioned

---

(1) SDV. VIII-I, p. 295.

in the Purāṇas.[1] Modern scholars have identified it with the Māhiṣmatī of Maṇḍanamiśra, mentioned by Vidyāraṇya.

It is to be noted that Mādhava Vidyāraṇya, the author of the Śaṅkaradigvijaya was removed in time from Maṇḍanamiśra by well over six centuries. An inhabitant of Kampili in the district of Bellary, south of the river Tuṅgabhadrā, he can have known little of Māhiṣmatī on the Narmadā or of Mithilā in north-eastern India. In the disturbed conditions of the times, on account of the campaigns of the Pathan rulers against the surviving Hindu chiefs, it is unlikely that he was aware of the local traditions concerning Maṇḍana in Mithilā. Moreover, today there is a village, Mahisī, in the district of Bhagalpur in Mithilā. It is counted as one of the fifty-two great centres of Tantrism in India (Śāktapīṭhas). A stone image of the Buddhist goddess Ugratārā, now adopted in the Brāhmanic pantheon for so long that her whole association with Buddhism is altogether forgotten, is worshipped here as a Tantric deity. The local people have no doubts that this place is the Māhiṣmatī of old, the home of Maṇḍanamiśra. They give the plausible derivation of the present name of the village Mahiṣī or Mahisī (the dialect form) from

---

(1) Dey, Nundo Lal: 'The geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India'. Calcutta. 1927. p. 120.

the original form Māhiṣmatī. There is another less known village Mahisām in the district of Darbhanga about twenty miles to the north-north-west of Mahisī. Mahisām, easily derivable from the Sanskrit 'Māhiṣmatī' has its own claim to being the home of the philosopher. We may not be able at this stage to decide which of these villages, deriving their name from Māhiṣmatī, is to be honoured as the home of Maṇḍana. It may, however, be assumed that in association with the philosopher who after his conversion to the Vedānta philosophy of Śaṅkara and adoption of Saṁnyāsa went to Śringeri (in the Mysore State) as the head of the monastic order there, the name Māhiṣmatī too travelled to the south and remained associated with the name of Maṇḍana for more than six centuries up to the middle of the fourteenth century A.D. Vidyāraṇya, it seems, was not, himself, sure of the exact location of Maṇḍana's Māhiṣmatī and, therefore, he gave it exactly as he had it from tradition, wtihout mentioning either the direction from Prayāga or the Narmadā itself which must have been known to him as one of the most sacred rivers of India.

Ānandagiri, on the other hand, does not mention Māhiṣmatī at all in his 'Śaṅkaravijayah'.(1) He was a direct disciple of Śaṅkara and a contemporary and probably associate, too, of Maṇḍana. His statement

---

(1) Bibliotheca Indica. Calcutta. 1868.

on the subject ~~is~~ therefore might be expected to be nearer the truth than Vidyāraṇya's. According to Ānandagiri, Śaṅkara left Prayāga and went to Kāśī. He covered this distance in a week and spent three months at Kāśī. He is then said to have gone northward to Amaraliṅga and Kedāraliṅga, and through Kurukṣetra to Badarīnārāyaṇa. From there he turned southward and through Dvārakā etc. came to Ayodhyā, and so to Gayā. He bathed in the Gaṅgā somewhere nearby and then went to Jagannātha (Purī). From there he went to Mallikārjuna on the hills in Ganjam, where he stayed for a month. At Ruddhapura, somewhere in the hills, he appeared to Kumārila on his funeral pyre. From there Śaṅkara went northward again, and reached Maṇḍana's birth-place, situated to the south-east of Hastināpura, just north of Delhi. Ānandagiri says that Maṇḍana's birth-place was called 'Vijilavindu' by the inhabitants: Kuveradinmārgamavalambya Hastināpurād āgneyadigbhāgasthalam vidyālayamatiprasiddham taddeśavāsinastu Vijilavinduriti vadanti.(1) Northward from Ruddhapura in the hills in western Orissa and south-eastward from Hastināpura (north of Delhi) would seem to point to Mithilā. Ānandagiri's mention of 'Vijilavindu' as the name of the place where Maṇḍana lived, presents another difficulty which might be met by making a comparison of the name 'Vijilavindu' with names of similar sound, viz. Bijuliā, Bijalīpura,

---

(1) SV. p. 238.

borne by a number of villages in Mithilā today, and by examining their traditions, if any, concerning Maṇḍana and comparing them with those of Mahisī and Mahisām. We cannot be sure of the exact location of his home, but the points enumerated below unmistakably suggest that it was situated somewhere in Mithilā:

Firstly, the universal belief in Mithilā that Maṇḍanamiśra lived there. He is frequently cited along with Vācaspatimiśra (842 A.D.) as one of the most respected authorities on laws and morals of Mithilā. He is remembered as a model householder and a profound scholar of strictly regulated life, unmindful of material gains, satisfied with whatever little means of livelihood he had and of kind disposition towards his fellow-beings.

Secondly, Maṇḍana's connexions with Kumārila, who was an inhabitant of Dakṣiṇarāḍhā (south-western Bengal), both as a pupil according to Vidyāraṇya, and as the husband of Kumārila's learned sister, according to Ānandagiri. Dakṣiṇarāḍhā and Mithilā being contiguous areas are suited for such intercourse. The intellectual and matrimonial relationships between the two peoples of Mithilā and Dakṣiṇarāḍhā that we come across in the case of Maṇḍana and Kumārila in the end of the eighth century A.D. continued right through the centuries and exist even today. If on the other hand, we accept Maṇḍana as an inhabitant

of Māhiṣmatī on the Narmadā, the vast distance between Dakṣiṇarādhā in the extreme east and the lower valley of the Narmadā in the extreme west of India, with the Vindhyas in between, rendering communications difficult, would reduce the chances of such a connexion to almost impossibility.

Thirdly, the fact of Mithilā and Dakṣiṇrādhā being the home of Mīmāṁsā (Vedic ritualism) in the days of Kumārila and Maṇḍana. People in the north of India, up to as far east as Nālandā, refer to the Mīmāṁsakas as 'Prācya' (easterners).(1) Śāntarakṣita, the Buddhist philosopher at the University of Nālandā, also refers to the Mīmāṁsakas as 'Prācyas' and was himself a contemporary of Maṇḍana and Kumārila. In the beginning of the twelfth century A.D. again, Kṛṣṇamiśrayati of Cedi (Jabbalapur), author of the Prabodhacandrodayah(2), an allegorical drama, refers to Dakṣiṇarādhā where Mīmāṁsā flourished: "Asti Rāḍhābhidhāno janapadah. Tatra Bhāgīrathīparisarālaṅkārabhute cakratīrthe Mīmāṁsānugatayā Matyā Kathancid dhāryamānaprāṇo vyākulenantarātmanā Viveka Upaniṣaddevyāh saṅgamārtham tapastapasyatīti". Ānandagiri in his Śaṅkaravijayah gives along with the itenerary of his Guru Śaṅkara a detailed survey of the religious faiths and sects as well as the

---

(1) Jha, Ganganatha: 'Tattvasaṅgraha' Eng. Trans. Vol. II. Baroda. 1939. p. viii

(2) Bombay. 1916. p. 138.

philosophical schools that were prevalent in the different places of India visited by Śaṅkara. He mentions Buddhism, Jainism, the materialism of the Cāruvākas, and Śaivism and Śaktism in their various forms as being the prevailing faiths in Ujjayinī and the countries round about,[1] which naturally include Māhiṣmatī on the Narmadā. There is no reference to Mīmāṁsā there, even by way of implication. Is it likely that Ānandagiri forgot to mention Mīmāṁsā in connexion with Māhiṣmatī on the Narmadā, when he lived in close association with Maṇḍana, a great Mīmāṁsist, probably the greatest of his time, until his conversion to the philosophy of Vedānta by Śaṅkara, and knew that Maṇḍana came from that part of India ?

Fourthly, Ānandagiri's mention of the direction of Maṇḍana's home as northward from Ruddhapura in the hills in western Orissa and south-east-ward from Hastināpura (north of Delhi). This clearly excludes Māhiṣmatī on the Narmadā.

And lastly, the itinerary of Śaṅkara himself. He set out to tour the whole of India and to unite the people under one common doctrine, that of the Vedānta. If we place Maṇḍana in western India, the whole of extreme north-eastern India would automatically have to be dropped out of Śaṅkara's itinerary, making it incomplete and utterly inconsistent with his grand

---

(1) SV. pp. 122-157.

project on the one hand, and unnecessarily duplicating his visits to the western regions, which he had already thoroughly covered on the other.

Maṇḍana was an ardent follower of Vedāntic ritualism (Mīmāṁsā). As such, his whole time and energy was devoted to the performance of daily rites as prescribed in the Vedic literature and to giving instructions to the students who would come to him from far and near. They would spend a few years with him, living as members of his family, learn from him whatever they could and then go back home.

When we talk of Mithilā as a centre of learning in this period, we are liable to take it for another Nālandā on the other side of the Gaṅgā in Magadha. The two institutions were, however, as different from each other as Brāhmanism itself was different from Buddhism. Nālandā was organised by a community on the principle of collective interest, as Buddhism itself was the Faith in the struggle for and attainment of the collective good. It was a university very much in the sense in which Oxford or Cambridge is one. Education or learning in Mithilā on the other hand was based on individual efforts. It had no fixed centre like Nālandā, with its huge halls and lofty towers where teachers in hundreds and students in thousands would assemble for the systematic dissemination of knowledge. Learning in Mithilā was not

systematic. Nor was it organised on the lines of a university. Individual pandits would attract students from different parts of India in their own homes, where they lived and were provided for by their teacher. The teacher's own income without which he could not maintain so large a family of the semi-permanent members must have depended on individual gifts of moveable property or land, made over to him by ruling chiefs or members of the landed aristocracy in recognition of his learning. The nature and use of these gifts would not be much different from those in the case of the Buddhist establishments like Nālandā. If a student wanted to learn more than one subject from more than one specialist, he would have to go from one teacher to another. There was thus no settled organisation behind this type of education. It was a matter of course for certain members of Mithilā society to receive and provide for students, just as tilling the soil and other avocations would be for certain other members. And though in our age of large scale organised efforts for social welfare we can only commend the system of education as developed by the Buddhists at Nālandā, Vikramaśilā and other centres, we should not overlook the benefits that the individualistic way of life, education and learning bestowed on the people in Mithilā. It ensured a continuity of intellectual tradition that persists even today when Nālandā and Vikramaśilā ~~vanished and~~ with their glories have long vanished.

Maṇḍana was a contemporary of Dharmapāla, the second in succession and probably the greatest of the Pāla rulers. Within a few years of his accession, he subjugated his adversaries over a wide area and brought about a rapid consolidation of the administration of his territories. Maṇḍana reconciled himself to the new regime of the Buddhist Pālas. He accepted the new Buddhist ruler as the rightful monarch according to the Vedic traditions, and, therefore, writes: 'The king is a kṣatriya' (Rājā kṣatriya ucyate'),[1] and does not go further into the academic definition of the king's membership of the kṣatriya caste. He recognised the signs of time, probably remembering the failure of his teacher and brother-in-law, Kumārila, and decided to submit, rather than try to remain erect and be broken in the process. We come across instances of such reconciliation on the part of Brāhmans, both before and after Maṇḍana. In many cases it is prompted by mere greed for material benefits to be derived from the flattered prince. This was not so with Maṇḍana. Judged against the background of his whole life, it must be concluded that in his attitude towards the new regime established by the Buddhist Pālas, he showed no mean submission but a catholicity of spirit which recognised merit even in a rival sect.

---

(1) MA. pp. 57-8.

The greater the influence of Buddhism over the people in Magadha, the greater was the effort of the Brāhmans of Mithilā to ward off the rapid spread of the anti-Vedic faith by stressing the observance of Vedic orthodoxy. Maṇḍana was never blind to the heart-rending spectacle of the prevailing poverty of the land. Moreover, it is clear that his orthodoxy was not unthinking. Change of opinions is not usually associated with Brāhman thought, but Maṇḍana did change his opinions, and for the better. It required a shock, the shock of Śaṅkara's visit, to shatter his confidence in the formal orthodoxy and the host of gods and goddesses. His early teaching is based on the accepted duties of an orthodox Brāhman. Maṇḍana enjoins three cardinal duties upon members of the three higher castes, performance of rites, procreation and study:

"Yajñah prajā cādhyayanam ca nityam
Varṇātraye nityamidam trayam syāt."(1)

The use of the term 'prajā' (progeny) is significant. The Purāṇas say that one cannot expect salvation without leaving a son behind at death ('aputrasya gatirnāsti'). Throughout Indian literature, beginning with the Vedas, it is a son that is the highest object of human desire. A daughter is not only not wanted, but was looked upon as a source of anxiety to the parents and therefore undesirable for

---

(1) MA. p. 236 (VI.2.31)

the family from the point of view of peace and happiness. In the 'Aitareya Brāhmaṇa'[1] the sage Nārada recommending the performance of a Yajña to King Hariścandra of the Ikṣvākus in order to obtain a son, says that a son is the very light of life, while a daughter is misery itself: 'Jyotirha putrah krpaṇam ha duhitā'. That sentiment finds expression on numerous occasions in Sanskrit literature. The Purāṇas still insist that it is a religious obligation to obtain a son before death, if the tortures of hell afterwards are to be avoided.

It is against this background that we can weigh the full implications of Maṇḍana's marriage with Bhāratī, also known as Śārdā or Sarasvatī (or Sarasavāṇī as Ānandegiri calls her, all these names being names of the Goddess of Learning). She was the learned sister of the philosopher Kumārila who was also Maṇḍana's teacher. Śāradā was versed in the Vedas and the later Śāstras, and shared the outstanding spirit of courage and personal sacrifice of her brother, Kumārila. It was impossible for a woman of that stature to keep within the narrow walls of a Brāhman home. Though never unmindful of household affairs, her intellect was highly developed. Moreover, her mind was unprejudiced. When Śaṅkara came to Maṇḍana and challenged him to debate their respective doctrines in public,

---

(1) Śunahśepopākhyānam.

the Mīmāṁsā against the Vedānta, it was she that mediated between them, and with true greatness of soul gave judgment in favour of Śaṅkara. Turning to her husband, she said "Come now and have thy wanderer's alms (saṁnyāsabhikṣā) from me; follow the great Parivrājaka (Śaṅkara) for good". Whereupon Maṇḍana cast off his householder's robe, and accepted the kaṣāya (saffroncolour clothes prescribed for a mendicant), daṇḍa (staff) and bhikṣā-pātra (alms-bowl) from his loving wife, took a last look at his home and followed Śaṅkara. Bhāraki, also, took the kaṣāya, and went with them. Husband and wife were, therefore, united in their life of renunciation, as they had been in their home.

In his life-long association with such a wife, it was impossible for Maṇḍana with his innate sense of justice to suffer from a complex of masculine superiority. As a writer on Mīmāṁsā, he, therefore, upholds the equal right of men and women to perform the yajñas ('patnīnām cādhikārotra'; 'dampatyosca yajih saha').(1) He is not alone in this, but the decision implied in his words is unparallelled.

Then, as today, in Mithilā and throughout India, performance of the Vedic rites was no longer an easy affair. Even the three universal rites,

---

(1) MA. p. 226.

Upanayana (initiation of a boy of normally between five and eight into the life of a student, brahmacārī), 'Vivāha' (marriage at or after twenty-five, when study has been completed) and Śrāddha (funeral rites) all of which have continued up to our own times and are compulsory, have become so elaborate and expensive that the major portion of rural indebtedness in India is directly due to them.

When, however, we take into account the fact that already the minimum prescribed for such ritual performances, as for instance the minimum number of eight Brāhmans to be fed on the occasion of an 'Upanayana' and eleven on that of a 'Śrāddha', we are reminded of Maṇḍana's ruling on the point: 'Adravyopyadhikāravān'.(1) (Even the poor have the right to perform yajñas).

The vigourous decision, which Maṇḍana as a follower of Mīmāṁsā showed in his attitude towards the female sex, he was not able to maintain altogether when he came to deal with the Śūdras. These unfortunates were still fated to go without the means of redemption. Repeating the age-old tradition, Maṇḍana says "The Śūdra is denied the right to perform Vedic rites" ("Śūdrādhikāraṁ inejyādau").(2) It would seem that

---

(1) MA. p. 228
(2) MA. p. 228

the old Aryan prejudice against the members of the submerged race was stronger than the prejudice against the female sex. Blood was still the supreme factor in the assignment of social position. Maṇḍana, as an upholder of the Mīmāṁsā, must, therefore, either have held the inferior position of the Śūdras to be just, or he bowed to the will of a society dominated by Brāhmanism. Yet Maṇḍana had vigorously upheld the rights of the poor and even the disabled - 'Aṅgahīnopyadhikṛtah'[1]- and had spoken out clearly against the greed of the Brāhmans[2] which they tried to cover with their Śāstric injunctions. Here it must be accepted that he failed to show his usual courage and charity.

We do not accept the view that Maṇḍana and the poet Bhavabhūti, author of the well-known Sanskrit dramas 'Mālatī-mādhavam', 'Mahavīracaritam' and 'Uttararāmacaritam', were the same person on the ground that they share the second name of 'Umbeka'[3]. The Mithilā tradition about Maṇḍana knows of nothing of Bhavabhūti. Ānandagiri and Mādhava Vidyāraṇya make no mention of either Bhavabhūti or of any of his works in connexion with Maṇḍana. Bhavabhūti was a

---

(1) MA. p. 228

(2) "Na lobhamūlam smaraṇam pramāṇam" - MA. p. 22.

(3) Jha, Ganganatha: "Bhāvanāviveka" of Maṇḍana Part II, Benares. 1923. pp. 3-4 (intro.)

poet of no mean order , so that these biographers of Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana could not possibly have overlooked his works. He was as eminent in the field of dramatic art, in which he ranked next to Kālidāsa himself, as Maṇḍana was in that of the Mīmāṁsā and the Vedānta, second to Śaṅkara. Bhavabhūti is, moreover, known from his own writings to have been an inhabitant of Vidarbha (Berar). He may well have been a pupil of Kumārila, who as the foremost exponent of Mīmāṁsā in India, must have attracted students from different parts of the country. It is clear that Bhavabhūti came of a family in which the Mīmāṁsā was followed. It is no wonder, therefore, that he became a pupil of Kumārila's, to sit at the feet of the greatest living master.

It is interesting to note, however, that the two personalities, as products of their age, had striking similarities in their attitudes towards life. Bhavabhūti, mentioned as one of the poets at the court of King Yaśovarman of Kanauj, lived about the middle of the eighth century A.D., while Maṇḍana as an older contemporary of Śaṅkara may well be placed in the last quarter of the same century. Both of them possessed in their earlier years the same buoyant self-confidence; in later years, as reflected in their works, they shared the same disillusionment. The causes are not far to seek. Of this period Raychaudhuri writes:

"The history of the Upper Ganges valley from the end of 646 to 836 is one of internal strife and of external invasion which ended when the royal throne of Harsha passed into the hands of the Pratiharas."(1) Such were the times. In the prologue of Bhavabhūti's dramatic work, the 'Mālatīmadhavam', the poet speaks of himself and his future with vigorous confidence:

"Ya nāma kecidiha nah prathayantyavañjām
Jānanti te kimapi tān prati naiṣa yatnah.
Utpatsyatesti vā mama kopi samānadharmā
Kālohyayam niravadhir vipulā ca pṛthvī". (2)

But this was to make room for an outlook of increasing gloom in his later work, the celebrated 'Uttararāmacaritam', in which the whole universe appears to the poet to be the manifestation of the one great Reality, the Agony of the soul:

"Eko rasah karuṇa eva nimittabhedād
Bhinnah pṛthakpṛthagivāśrayate vivartān.
Āvarttabudbudatarañgamayān vikārān
Ambho yathā salilameva tu tatsamagram."(3)

The theory of ignorance(4) as propounded by Mandana is at once the weakness and strength of his philosophy of suffering. While it cannot stand the

---

(1) Raychaudhuri, H.C.: AHI. p. 161.

(2) Bhavabhūti: 'Mālatīmādhavam'.

(3) Bhavabhūti: 'Uttararāmacaritam'. III. 47.

(4) Dasgupta, S.N.: 'A History of Indian Philosophy' Vol. II. Cambridge. 1932. pp. 84, 89-90, 101-2.

scrutiny of logical analysis, it does greatly develop the human sense of dignity through its postulation of an all-pervasive, immanent, conscious Reality of which each individual atom in the Universe is conceived to form a part. The repeated set-backs to his efforts to find a solution of the problem of misery have not succeeded in diminishing the philosopher's indomitable spirit. He refuses to accept a position for Man less than that of equality with the Supreme Being Himself.

VĀCASPATIMIŚRA
(842 A.D.)

In his 'Nyāyasūcīnibandha', Vācaspati gives the date of the composition of that work as 898 ('Vasv-aṅka-vasu-vatsare'), which seems to be of the Vikrama Era that began in 57 B.C.(1) The year 898 of the Vikrama Era is equivalent to 842 of the Christian Era. King Devapāla of Magadha ruled from c. 810 A.D. to c. 850 A.D. Vācaspati may, therefore, be taken to have been a contemporary of Devapāla's.

A difficulty, however, arises from Vācaspati's having mentioned a King Nṛga in the colophon to his 'Bhāmatī', the commentary on Śaṅkara's commentary on the Brahmasūtras of Bādarāyaṇa. Here he specifically

---

(1) Dasgupta, S.N.: 'A History of Indian Philosophy' Vol. II. Cambridge. 1932. pp. 106-7.

says he wrote his work during the reign of King Nṛga of great fame, whom other kings tried to imitate but failed:

"Nṛpāntarāṇām manasāpyagamyam
Bhrūkṣepamātreṇa cakāra kīrtim.
Kārtasvarāsārasupūritārtha sārthah
Svayam śāstravicakṣaṇaśca.

Nareśvarā yaccaritānukāram
Icchanti karttum na ca pārayanti
Tasmin mahīpe mahanīyakīrttau
Śrīmān Nṛge-kāri mayā nibandhah."(1)

No evidence is available for the identification of this King Nṛga. Inspite of the fact that Vācaspati refers to him as a great king, he is not mentioned in the literary works of any other author, either contemporary or later. We know of the King Nṛga of the Purāṇas, renowned for his gifts to Brāhmans by one of whom he was by a curse condemned to the life of a lizard, until Lord Kṛsna comes and redeems him. We know, also, of the prevailing tendency among Sanskrit writers in particular, and the people in India in general, to give descriptive names, as one or more than one, to individuals in addition to their personal ones. The qualities that Vācaspati attributes to Nṛga might certainly be applied to King Devapāla too.

There is, indeed, some ground for supposing that the name 'Nṛga' does refer to King Devapāla: Brāhman authors liked to name the kings of a different

---

(1) Vācaspatimiśra: 'Bhāmatī' (Bibliotheca Indica) Benares. 1880. p. 766. Verses 5, 6.

faith after the heroes of their own history and tradition. It was, thus, not only easier for them to remember the names, but, also, fed their vanity. A Brāhmanic name given to a powerful Buddhist ruler was a veiled criticism of him by the Brāhmans, while it gave no grounds for offence, because of its glorious associations in legend and history. The associations of the name Nṛga, moreover, were obvious to the Brāhmans in as much as Nṛga is remembered, not so much as a great king, as a king fallen from his high position through the curse of a Brāhman, provoked by the error of the king. The story of Nṛga, together with the stories of Nahuṣa and Tṛśaṅku have passed from generation to generation of the followers of Brāhmanism as illustrations of the superiority of Brāhmans over the members of all other castes.

Very little is known about the personal life of Vācaspati. According to the tradition current in Mithilā, he was a Maithila Brāhman of ordinary means. His wife was called Bhāmatī, but they had no children. He and his wife are the subject of many legendary stories still to be heard in Mithilā. If these tales may be accepted as preserving something of the truth, it would seem that the contentment and peace of mind in which Vācaspati lived was as much personal as circumstantial. As we have seen, Devapāla inherited a kingdom of extensive territory from his great father

Dharmapāla, who had successfully established his overlordship over the whole of Āryāvarta. Devapāla's achivements in both war and peace were considerable. His younger paternal cousin, Jayapāla, was an able administrator and kept peace at home while Devapāla was occupied with his wars. The later years of Devapāla's reign extending over forty years, were comparatively peaceful, though the kingdom still lacked a fixed headquarters and a regular coinage system, the two great requirements of a stable government.

The whole outlook of Vācaspati reflects the spirit of his age. Misery was no obsession to him as it had been to Maṇḍana and Śaṅkara. He was conscious of its existence, but accepts it with a calm resignation. Human psychology is such that the same amount of suffering arouses different degrees of reaction in different environments. In a disturbed state of political affairs, the prospect of a change arouses expectations and so intensifies the sense of misery, even in the case of those who are not directly involved in the struggle for power. The comparative stability of the administration during the reign of the Buddhist Devapāla offered no promise of a change of regime to the Brāhmans, though they were by no means satisfied with a Buddhist ruler, however just and benevolent he might be,

"It would be wrong to say", says Vācaspati, "that there is no misery, as it would be equally wrong

to say that one does not try to avoid miseries":

"Tatra na tāvad duhkhannāsti nāpyajihāsitam
ityuktam." (1)

Misery and the desire to avoid it are facts too potent to escape anyone's notice. It is when we attempt to arrive at its real nature, that problems arise. While logic points to the utter helplessness of Man in the matters of daily experience, an unquestioning acceptance of this state of existence would not only render the idea of a Creator impossible, but make Man's own position even more miserable without the hope of redemption through his own efforts. Vācaspati throws the responsibility of his misery on Man himself. His ignorance according to the philosopher, is the cause of his misery. The nature[2] of this ignorance, which he describes, holds, however, little encouragement for those that look forward to an early termination of their woes. According to him, there is no end to this ignorance from which arise the sorrows of 'mahāpralaya' (the great dissolution of the Universe). When through the Will of the Great Being another age begins, irnorance starts again on its march, causing unwary beings to deviate from their right path to their loss and pain. How best then to avoid it ? 'Knowledge, more knowledge' is Vācaspati's solution,

---

(1) 'Tattvakaumudī'. Poona. 1934. Text pp. 1-2.

(2) Dasgupta, S.N.: 'A History of Indian Philosophy' Vol. II. Cambridge. 1932. pp. 108-111.

as it is of all Vedāntists before and after him. There seems to be no end to this search for knowledge as the way out of sorrow. But as the search goes on, misery unfortunately continues.

Vācaspati's approach to the problems of life is more intellectual and less practical (i.e. humane or emotional) than Maṇḍana's. He is, therefore, found less often to deviate from the path or pure logic, that Maṇḍana or Śaṅkara do. Even so he is not sure of the way; his thought is not altogether homogenous. His philosophy of implied determinism is, thus, seen to be tempered by his homage to Parameśvara[1] (the Great God), probably in the hope that He in his mercy would help him out of his difficulties in case, as he seems to fear, knowledge fails to save him.

UDAYANA
(984 A.D.)[2]

With Udayana in the latter half of the tenth century A.D. we reach another phase in the development of the Brāhmanic philosophy of Mithilā. This was the declining phase and it came about as a result of the decline of the Pālas in Magadha after

---

(1) 'Bhāmatī' Colophon. Verse 4.

(2) Radhakrishnan, S.: 'Indian Philosophy' Vol. II London. 1927. p. 40.

the death of Devapāla. Udayana was a contemporary of Mahīpāla I who had to resist a number of intruders upon Pāla territory during the reign of his father. He was successful in defeating them and regained the old territory, but could not stay the downward movement. As usual in the history of India, the decline of the Pālas of Magadha meant a rise in the fortunes of the Brāhmans in Mithilā. Each time such a decline set in, the followers of the Vedas turned to dreams of Brāhmanic rule. The dream was fulfilled in this case when Nānyadeva of a Karṇāṭa family in South India reached Mithilā through Bengal in the twelfth century A.D. and, finding that the rule of the later Pālas over Mithilā was almost extinct, offered himself as a king to the Maithila Brāhmans. Only too glad to have a follower of their own faith as their ruler in place of the Buddhist Pālas whom they now openly rejected, they accepted Nānyadeva joyfully. This event had its precedents in the return to power of the Śuṅgas after the Mauryyas and of the Guptas after the Kuṣāṇas.

In Udayana we do not come across either the vigorous humanism of Maṇḍana and Śaṅkara or the intellectual detachment and calm resignation of Vācaspati. Rather we meet in him a revival of the agressive Brāhmanism, though probably less violent, of Kumārila. Their purpose was to take advantage of the weakening influence of the later Pālas and drive out Buddhism for ever, as had been attempted, without success of

course, by Kumārila himself in the confusion of the post-Harṣa era. With the increasing threat to Buddhism through the Muslim invasions, the conservatism of the Brāhmans became more pronounced, and soon reached the level of fanaticism. When Buddhists were being put to the sword by the Muslim invaders, the Brāhmans showed no sympathy for them and denied them shelter in their homes. At that time there was no sign of the now notorious antagonism between the followers of Islam and those of Brāhmanism. The issue was between the invading Muslims and the non-resisting Buddhist community. The majority of the latter were massacred; a few escaped into the Himālaya in Nepal, where their descendants still preserve a debased form of the faith of their ancestors.

In the following verse, attributed to Udayana, there is more of vanity than of self-confidence, a marked contrast to the similar verse[1] of Bhavabhuti already quoted:

"Vayamiha padavidyām tarkamānvīkṣikīm va
Yadi pathi vipathe vā vartayāmaḥ sa panthā.
Udayati diśi yasyām Bhānumāṁ sā hi pūrvā
Na his taraṇirudīte dikparādhīnavṛttih."

The slight is undoubtedly directed here to the Buddhist logicians, who had from the days of Dinnāga[2]

---

(1) supra. p. ~~146~~

(2) Vidyabhusana, S.C.: 'History of Indian Logic' Calcutta. 1921. p. 272.

in the fifth century A.D. to the great days of Nālandā when Śīlabhadra[1] (635 A.D.), Dharmakīrti[2] (635-50 A.D.), Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla[3] (750 A.D.) all taught, made notable contributions to the literature of Logic and Philosophy.

In his 'Kusumāñjlih', Udayana tries to prove the existence of a benevolent God, as against the assertions of the Buddhists to the contrary. The arguments that he proposes are, however, less worthy of a thinker than of a religious preacher. But no one realized the futility of zeal in defence of and devotion to a hypothetical benevolent almighty Deity better than Udayana himself. Disappointed in his expectations of God in return for his devotion to the proofs of His existence, Udayana is reported to have addressed Him thus:

"Aiśvaryamadamattosi māmavajñāya vartase.
Parākrāntesu Bauddhesu madadhīnā tavāsthitih."[4]

VIKRAMAŚILĀ
and
DĪPAṄKARA ŚRĪJÑĀNA or ATĪŚA

"By the beginning of the eleventh century A.D., numerous Indian and Kashmiri monks were again

---

(1) Ibid. p. 303
(2) Ibid. p. 303
(3) Ibid. p. 323
(4) Radhakrishnan, S.: 'Indian Philosophy' Vol. II. London. 1927. p. 40.

frequenting Tibet. And in 1038 A.D. arrived Atīśa, the great reformer of Lamaism".(1) Atīśa was known in India as Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna. According to the Tibetan chronicles he was born in 980 A.D. of the royal family of Gauda at Vikramanipur in Bengal. His father was Kalyāṇa-Śrī and his mother, Prabhāvatī. He was ordained at the Odantapurī Vihār where he underwent training under both Mahāyāna teachers and the Mahāsiddhi priests. His most notable masters were Chandrakīrti, the abbot of Suvarṇadvīpa and Mahāsiddhi Naro. Before he left for Tibet, he had taught at the Vikramaśilā university in Magadha. It is known that he was a contemporary of Nayapāla, son of King Mahīpāla.

Dīpaṅkara's moral and intellectual qualities endeared him to all at Vikramaśilā and throughout Magadha. So much so, that on the eve of his departure for Tibet as the result of an invitation from the King of that country, Ratnākara, the head of the Vikramaśilā monastery, remarked, "without Atīśa India will be in darkness. He holds the key to many institutions. In his absence many monasteries will be empty."(2)

---

(1) L.A. Waddell: Buddhism of Tibet, London. 1895. p. 35.

(2) HB. p. 676.

CHAPTER V
THE SCULPTOR

Sculpture of the Cave-temples

The Buddhist cave-temples in western India which were executed before the Christian era, or during the first century after it, belong to the Hīnayāna sect and are generally plain in style; and devoid of images of Buddha for worship.(1) Buddhist cave-temples belonging to the Mahāyāna sect are all subsequent to the year A.D. 100, after which images of Buddha first began to appear. "These images", says Burgess,(2) gradually in the course of time supersede the earlier dāgoba or relic-shrine, until in the latest examples, the personages represented become numerous, and the pre-eminence of Buddha himself seems to have been threatened by the growing favour for Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, who, in Nepal, under the better known name of Padmapāṇi, had become the favourite divinity of the populace." In the early caves at Ajantā, the central figure in the shrine is the earthly Buddha,(3) the Bodhisattvas like Padmapāṇi, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi being sculptured as 'dvārapālas' (door-keepers) on

---

(1) I. Burgess: Cave-temples of Western India p. 170. London. 1880.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid. p. 176.

either side of the shrine door. The images of Buddha found in so many of the Western Buddhist caves "are always represented as seated, though often attended by standing figures bearing fly-flaps. The seated figures are distinguished by Buddhists according to the position of the hands. The most usual attitude of the great teacher is that in which he is represented as seated on a throne, the corners of which are upheld by two lions, with his feet on a lotus-blossom and his hands in front of his breast holding the little finger of the left hand between the thumb and the fore-finger of the right. This is known as the 'Dharmacakra-mudrā' or attitude of 'turning the wheel of the law', that is of teaching. He is also sometimes represented standing or with his legs doubled up under him and his hands in this mudrā or attitude."(1)

Burgess further observes: "The next most common attitude of Buddha is that in which the Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras are always represented, viz. with their legs doubled under them in a squatting attitude, and the hands laid one on the other over the feet with the palms turned upwards. This position of meditative absorption is called the Jñāna or Dhyāna mudrā. A third attitude in which he is sometimes represented, as when under the Bodhi tree, where he is said to have attained to Buddhahood, is called the 'Vajrāsana'

---

(1) Ibid. p. 178.

or 'Bhūmiśparśamudrā', when the left hand lies on the upturned soles of the feet, and the right resting over the knee, points to the earth. He is also figured on the walls standing with the right hand uplifted in the attitude of blessing, or with the almsbowl of the Bhikṣu or mendicant.... Behind the head is often represented a nimbus (Bhāmaṇḍala) or aureole, as in medieval figures of the saints. This occurs in the earliest sculptured and painted figures of Buddha, probably as early as the third century and possibly even earlier."(1)

On either side of the principal image are usually found attendants, standing with 'chaurīs' or fly-whisks in their hands. These vary in different sculptures. In some shrines Padmapāṇi, holding a lotus by the stalk, is on one side, his hair in the 'jaṭā' or head-dress of a bhikṣu, and Mañjuśrī or Vajrapāṇi on the other. On the front of the seat is usually sculptured a wheel (cakra) with a deer conchant on each side of it. Sometimes behind the deer are a number of kneeling worshippers on each side.(2) In later reliefs, however, Buddha is often sculptured seated on a lotus, the stalk of which is upheld by Nāga figures.

---

(1) Ibid. pp. 178-79

(2) Burgess: Cave-temples. Plate XXXV.
(Ajanta cave no. XVII.
Image of Buddha in the shrine)

In the Brāhmanical cave-temples in western India such as those at Bādamī and Elurā, the central object is the 'liṅgam', the symbol of the Śaiva cult. The decorative sculptures are, however, largely Vaiṣṇava, in Cave III, Bādamī wholly so. In the Purāṇic pantheon, the idea of a supreme deity is weak, Śiva, Viṣṇu or Devī (named variously as Durgā, Kālī, Caṇḍī etc.) being accepted as the representative god or goddess by people belonging to different areas or sectarian groups. And though numerous sects were founded in the names of various gods and goddesses - not often without jealousy or rivalry among themselves - there was always an attempt to unify the divergent views concerning the Supreme Being under a comprehensive idea that included all these gods and goddesses as manifestations of the same All-powerful, All-pervasive Being. The appearance of the Trimūrti (the trinity of Brahmā, the creator, Viṣṇu, the preserver, and Śiva, the destroyer of evil and upholder of good) in early medieval sculpture was the objective synthesis of religeo-philosophical ideas that had been long at war with each other. The Trimūrti of the cave-temple at Elephanta[1] (near Bombay) is the best known of such images in western India. Other examples occur in the lesser caves at Elurā.

---

(1) Burgess: Cave-temples. pp. 465 ff.

The central object in cave III at Bādāmī (executed under Pulikeśin I, the great Chālukya ruler, about the year 560 A.D.) is the 'liṅgam', but on the righthand side of the verandah is a representation of Viṣṇu Trivikrama and on the left a magnificent figure of Viṣṇu resting on Ananta, which is striking because it does not correspond with any description in the iconographical texts. Moreover, on the lintel above the entrance is sculptured the Churning of the Ocean. This sculpture is distinguished by a radical difference from the purāṇic accounts, according to which the Asuras approached Viṣṇu to seek his interventions. Here at Bādāmī all the three great gods of the Brāhmanical Trinity are represented.(1)

The Brāhmanical caves at Elurā are mostly later than the caves at Bādāmī. According to Burgess,(2) the Bādāmī caves may be dated in the last quarter of the sixth century A.D. He holds that the Kailāsa rock-cut temple at Elurā was commenced in or about 725 A.D. and that the rest of the cave-temples there were executed between the last quarter of the sixth century and the first quarter of the eighth.(3)

The sculptures on the walls, pillars, niches etc. of the various Brāhmanical cave-temples at Elurā

---

(1) ASI. Mem. No. 25. pp. 22-23

(2) Cave-temples, pp. 431-2.

(3) The last of the great Buddhist Caitya caves, the so-called Viśvakarmā Cave at Ellura shares with typical dwarf friezes of the period, but is probably a little earlier.

e.g. Rāvana-kā-Khai, Kailāsa, Rāmeśvara, Nīlakaṇṭha, etc. include images of Viṣṇu (in various forms such as Anantaśāyin, and the ten incarnations), as well as Śiva (with Pārvatī as well as dancing the Tāṇḍava), Durgā Mahiṣamardinī and other minor gods and goddesses.

Gopinatha Rao in his Hindu Iconography[1] discusses at length the three most widely prevalent forms of the images of Viṣṇu. The standing image is called a 'Sthānaka-mūrti', the sitting image an 'Āsana-mūrti', and the reclining image a 'Śayana-mūrti'. The images in each of the three forms are further classified into 'Yoga', 'Bhoga', 'Vīra' and 'Ābhicārika' varieties based on slight differences. These varieties are intended to be worshipped by different desires: thus, the Yogī should worship the Yoga form, those who desire enjoyment should worship the 'Bhoga' form, those who desire prowess, the Vīra form and kings and others who wish to conquer their enemies, the ābhicārika form.[2]

The conception of Iṣṭa-Devatā (literally the desired or chosen deity) is obviously farely late. But it is clear that an Iṣṭadevatā is a household god or goddess. The number of gods and goddesses increased from thirty-three (the traditional number) in the Vedas to thirty-three crores (Skt. Koṭi)

---

(1) Vol. I. pp. 78 ff.

(2) Ibid. plates XVII-XXXII.

i.e. three hundred and thirty million in the Purāṇas which were given their present form in the late medieval period. It was not possible for an individual or a family to make offerings to all these million gods and goddesses. Each individual had therefore to make a choice, and according to his desires, he would offer his prayer to a god or goddess who was traditionally known to be inclined to fulfil such desires. A god or goddess having been once chosen by a person, and the fulfilment of his desires having once followed the choice of and prayer to him or her, the god or goddess came to be accepted as the family deity and was continued as such through generations. Any of the gods or goddesses could be adopted as an Iṣṭadevatā.

Pāla Sculpture

An examination of the medieval sculptures found in the north-eastern provinces of India leads one to the conclusion that a new school of sculpture rose in these provinces in the later part of the medieval period (800 - 1200 A.D.). Further investigations prove that the date of the rise of this school synchronised with the formation of a new empire in the eastern half of northern India by Dharmapāla, the second independent king of Magadha and Gauḍa. The majority of images and in many cases architectural specimens also, which have been discovered in these provinces, can be dated with much greater exactitude

than the works of any other province or school in India.[1] In the case of the majority of these sculptures we do not find their dates actually engraved upon them; but in almost every case, there is either a short votive record or a religious formula inscribed on the base, and it is the forms of the characters of these inscriptions which enable us to determine the date of the sculptures on which they are inscribed.

A detailed examination of these short inscriptions points to the following conclusions:

(1) That the rise of the Pāla empire in Bengal and Bihar gave a great impetus to art in these provinces, which caused great improvement in the plastic art of this country and finally led to the formation of a new school of sculpture in the provinces constituting the first empire of the Pālas. The rise of this school must have taken place soon after the formation of the empire of the Pālas in the 9th century A.D.

(2) The decline of the political power of the Pālas, on account of the rise of the Gurjarapratīhāras in central and northern India, had a corresponding effect on the art-products of the eastern provinces of India.

(3) The revival of the power of the Pālas, under Mahīpāla I, led to the revival of artistic activity in Bengal and Bihar. The final decline of Pāla power in

---

(1) EISMS. p. 18.

the last quarter of the 11th century led to a general decline of artistic activity in Magadha and Gauḍa.

(4) A temporary increase in civil power under the Senas in these two provinces had practically little or no effect on their artistic activities.(1)

In Magadha, so far, we have no evidence of artistic activities before 600 B.C. In Mithilā the sculptural evidence belongs to even later times. The reasons for the greater antiquity of Magadhan art, as compared with that of Mithilā, are not far to seek. The southern fringes of Magadha form pat of the oldest rock-formation in India, commonly known as the Vindhya-system, stretching right across the centre of the India peninsula from west of Bombay to Rājmahal in the east. It consists of several parallel as well as oblique ranges. This huge mountain-system is formed of rocks of varying qualities from the point of view of sculpture. In the west, the grey or red sandstones and the marbles, and, in the east, the basalt gave rise to distinct schools of sculpture in the different periods of Indian history. Basalt which came to be almost the sole medium of stone-sculpture in post-Gupta times in the east was not, however, the first choice of the sculptors there. The oldest sculptural remains from Magadha belonging to the pre-Mauryan times are cut in sand-stone. The Mauryan artists adopted a

---

(1) EISMS. p. 18.

hard grey sand-stone of a fine quality and applied to it the polish that is the chief characteristic of the sculpture of the age. After the Mauryans, for about seven centuries, sandstones of various rather inferior qualities were the chief medium of stone-sculpture. Then, about the seventh century A.D., basalt, generally known as the black Gaya-stone, came into use as the standard medium for sculpture. The sculptural remains we come across there at once suggest that they originated in Magadha; the stone, the subject and the technique all resemble those of the sculptural remains across the Gaṅgā.

The history of Indian art records a rise and fall in quality following the exact chronological order of political and economic prosperity and decay in the country. Each period in the history of Art, as of literature and philosophy, is associated with the name of the ruling dynasty. Between the art of Mohenjodaro (Sind) and Harappa (Punjab) in B.C. 3200-2800[1], and that of Magadha under the Śaiśunāga kings (600 B.C.), there is a long gap of about 2500 years which further extensive excavation may or may not fill. There are many archaeological sites which from their very situation and the surface-remains exposed promise a rich return. Archaeological exploration and excavation in India have so far been

---

(1) John H. Marshall: Mohenjodaro and Indus Valley Civilization. 3 vols. London. 1931.

an exclusive affair of officials, with the result that a vast amount of talent that should, and would have contributed to the gathering of historical data, literary as well as archaeological, has either remained idle or been wasted on efforts least suited to it. In consequence the progress in reconstructing the history of India has been slow. With historical traditions of the Śaiśunāgas (600 B.C.), however, the story begins and goes on without a break until about 1100 A.D. when another chapter starts with an altogether different setting. Archaeology begins with the Mauryan remains,(1) including a highly developed architecture(2) and well stylised sculpture. Then came the period of the Śung-Āndhra art (c. 150 B.C.) at Bhārhut, Sānchī, Buddhagayā and Amarāvatī, followed by that of the Kuṣāṇas (Mathura, 100 A.D.), with which the Gandhāra or the Greeko-Buddhist art must be discussed, the Guptas (c. 350 A.D. - 500 A.D.) and finally the Pālas (c. 750 - 1100 A.D.)

We shall confine ourselves here to the last of these periods of artistic development. Under the Pālas, Magadha once more came to be the centre of marked cultural activity in the beginning of the eigth century A.D. In art as in religion, philosophy and literature, her contributions stand out as

---

(1) Sandstone massive male figure (Indian Museum, Calcutta)

(2) ASR. 1926-27.

distinctive and are of absorbing interest still. The immense architectural and sculptural remains at Nālandā and the region around ~~about~~ speak of a people, pressed hard by ruthless forces, struggling resolutely for a life of peace and happiness for all under the Buddhist rule. The results of the struggle with the organised Muslim power were inevitable. Monasteries sheltering thousands of students and teachers from far and near were demolished; the sculpture mutilated; and the libraries full of illuminated manuscripts, burnt. The leaders of Buddhist culture were massacred by Bakhtear Khilji and his horsemen in 1199 A.D. Only a few escaped with a number of manuscripts to Nepāla and Tibet; the rest surrendered to the 'grace' of Islam.

The paintings with which these illuminated manuscripts from Nālandā were decorated[1] were discovered in Nepāla by B.H. Hodgson[2] in the third decade of the nineteenth century. They belong to the middle of the twelfth century A.D., earlier by some decades than the sack of Nālandā and the rest of the Buddhist monasteries at the end of the century. We have no paintings belonging to earlier times from Magadha; we are left with architectural and sculptural remains on which to base our conclusions concerning Pāla art. The picture of life as presented

---

(1) Libraries of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.

(2) W.W. Hunter: Life of Hodgson. London. 1896. pp.

by the sculptors of Magadha has a simplicity that may not always be graceful, but is always poignant. It is by no means a happy picture. It is true the Pāla sculptors carved monstrous figures with more than two arms and one head; with necklaces of skulls rather than of flowers. From this point of view it is a grotesque art. And yet it represents a natural fact. This art of monstrous symbols and designs is the product of an age in which monstrosity in all its forms prevailed. As we have seen, great minds were at work, trying to restore the balance. But they proved unequal to the task. What followed was an age of distrust and unbelief. Individuality and the individual problem was lost in mere tradition. Art is killed by iconography.

BRĀHMANISM

VISNU

The commonest form adopted in making an image of Viṣṇu was a standing figure[1] with one head and four arms bearing the śaṅkha (conch), cakra (wheel), gadā (mace) and padma (lotus). There is another form in which the god is 'seated on Garuḍa, with the bosom shining with the 'kaustubha' (Jewel), wearing all ornaments, resembling in colour the water-laden cloud and (clothed) in a blue and beautiful garment... four faces and arms twice that. The eastern face

---

(1) VD. pp. 65-6.

is called Saumya (placid), the southern Narasinha (man-lion), the western Kāpila and the northern Vārāha (boar-like). Viṣṇu wears Vanamālā (long garland of flowers), and in his right hands...an arrow, a rosary, a club and so forth, and...in his left hands...a skin, a garment and a bow".(1) There are forms with variations with regard to the number and arrangement of arms and the weapons in the different hands. The Viṣṇu-dharmottara preserves ancient traditions of painting and proves that the stylised Pāla icons came at the end of a richer, more vital, tradition.

Whatever be the variations in the form, the conception of the deity is the same everywhere. In the Brāhman Trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa, Viṣṇu is the preserver of the universe. Pāla sculpture was especially concerned with the creation of images of Viṣṇu, and we may trace in the Pāla images of Viṣṇu the dominant emotions of the age. In his fear of reality man looks for protection and he visualises the Protector with his saumya, first pleasant, then compassionate, features. When endurance ends, man turns to the saviour. Viṣṇu, the preserver, is the ever-present help in trouble. He was not the product of philosophical abstraction. He was born of a desperate human desire for protection. The way was by no means plain. Man had lost faith in spiritual

---

(1) VD. pp. 65-6.

cures. Thousands of years had been wasted in experiments in the spiritual regeneration of the brute in man, who persistently refused to discard the way of force and learn the technique of a life of compassion. Hence the necessity of the protector God being a warrior and no saffron-clad monk preaching a non-resistance to evil that ultimately means an abject surrender to the forces of greed, ruthless domination and unrestrained violence. Viṣnu the warrior-protector calls, with the sound of his conch, men to his standard, sending out a challenge to the enemies of his divine order. He stands ready with his wheel (cakra) and mace (gadā) to crush the enemy.

The lotus, Viṣnu also carries, seems to pair ill with the deadly weapons cakra and gadā in his other hands. This apparent disparity in combining a thing of natural beauty with objects of destruction deserves analysis, for it is no isolated fact. This conception of natural beauty in the midst of terror and destruction runs through the whole iconography of the age. Vaiṣnava iconography, traditional as it is at this period and even stereotyped, must therefore be taken as an expression of the spirit of the age. For all its exquisite beauty, it was no mere love of beauty in Nature that made the sculptor carve the lotus, side by side with the gadā and cakra. The lotus is a common Indian flower but it has ancient associations

both literary and visual. It occurs frequently in Sanskrit poetry and plays an important part in Brāhman ritual. The loving care with which flowers and fruits are portrayed in ancient Indian art is universally acknowledged. It is, indeed, India's special contribution to the history of art. Nature was no mere subject for decoration for the sculptor in Magadha. It was the background of his art as of his life itself. If it is not brought out in his compositions as often as had been done by his predecessors at Budhagāyā (200 A.D.), Sānchī (100 A.D.), Bhārhut (100 B.C.) and Mathurā (100 A.D.), because his interest was focussed on iconography. The period of freedom in the creation of art had, it is true, passed. Religious conventions had dominated the creative, but this was the result of history. Man turned to religion and priestcraft in what was truely an Iron Age. In Magadha Viṣnu dominates the idealism without which all religion is dead. Faced with bitter reality, man turned to the god, who was the saviour. It is wholly intelligible, therefore, that Viṣnu should be worshipped at this time chiefly in the form of his saviour re-incarnations.

VARĀHA(1)

Bannerji writes: "A collosal image of the Boar incarnation is to be found close to the entrance

---

(1) EISMS. Plate XLV c.

of the Indian Museum at Calcutta. It wasfound in the ruins of Nālandā and brought to Bihar by Broadley, whence it was removed to Calcutta. The Matsyapurāṇa gives the following description of the Varāha:

Mahāvarāham Vakṣyāmi padmahastam gadādharam
Tīkṣṇadaṁṣṭrāgraghoṇāsyam medinī vāmakūrpaṇe.
(Verse 28)

Daṅṣṭrāgreṇoddhṛtam dantam dharaṇimutpalā-
nvitam
Vismayotphullavadanamuparisṭāt prakalpayet.
(Verse 29)

Dakṣiṇam Kaṭisaṁstham tu karam tasya prakalpayet
Kūrmopari tathā padamekam nagendramūrdhani
(Verse 30)

- Matsyapurāṇam Chap. 260.

"In the Nālandā image the left foot of the Boar is placed on a lotus held in the hands of the Nāga, while in the 'Purāṇa' it is stated that one foot is placed on his head. To the left appears a figure of a Nāgī. Varāha has four hands... Images of the Board incarnation are rather common in Bengal and Bihar."(1)

A description of Varāha very similar to the one in the Matsyapurāṇa quoted above occurs in the Agnipurāṇa under the chapter on the images of Viṣnu:

---

(1) EISMS. pp. 103-4.

Narāṅgo vātha karttavyo bhūvaraho gadādibhṛt
Dakṣiṇe vāmake śaṅkham Lakṣmīrvā padmameva vā.
Śrī rvāmakūrpparasthā tu kṣmānantau caraṇānugau,
Varāhasthāpanādrājyam bhavābdhitaraṇam bhavet. (1)

The Nālandā image[2], referred to above, agrees, in its outline, with the description given in the Matsya and Agni purāṇas quoted above. Varāha has here a human body and a boar's head. He raises the Earth goddess in the form of a beautiful woman on his left arm, supporting her against his raised tusk. There is the gadā in the upper right hand, pāśa in the lower right and cakra in the lower left hands. The left leg is raised and the whole body is thrown forward in a perfect pose of vigorous movement.

The sense of 'protection' in the worship of a Being who, to the sculptor, does not permit vain and endless suffering, has been brought out in this figure in a marvellous way. The very appearance of a boar-head over a human body would be grotesque to a spectator unfamiliar with the traditions of Indian iconography. The earliest examples of the icon are Gupta, but it was particularly popular in Magadha at this period. We too often forget that our appreication of art and art-forms is no less determined by the environment in which we live than our habits of material life. In his Varāha form,

---

(1) AP. Chap. Verses 2-3.

(2) EISMS. Plate XLV c.

the saving power of the great god is clearly expressed. These Vaiṣṇava figures were to the devout Brāhman what the Bodhisattva figures were to the later Buddhists. The iconography of the two rival religions developed along the same lines under the same conditions. The applicability of the Varāha myth to the craving for salvation which is distinctive of the period needs no explanation. The earth was plunged into darkness. Man wasnot the only child of Mother Earth. She maintains millions of living beings, who, lost in life's difficulties, cling to their Mother, who, however, is powerless to save them. Viṣnu is visualised as the saviour of all creation. Man can no longer live in his bright marble-castle of illusion. He can no longer think that he is the sole creation of the Lord and that the rest of the diversity of creatures on earth were created merely to serve and flatter him. His conceit gives way to a deeper conception and he conceives the idea of equality and brotherhood with livings beings as a whole in their myriad forms. This sense of universalism was his one great gain from his adversity. In sculpture, philosphy or literature, even in the court-proclamations of the age, it has left its evidence everywhere. As always in India, there were other currents of thought and other ways of behaviour; priestcraft with its dead ritual still persisted. But 'it's not in Man to command success'. Salvation must come from the Saviour. If a relentless effort for the cessation of pain and restoration of happiness to all creatures on the Earth

be considered an act of goodness and praise, these sculptors and the thinkers they worked for are entitled to our gratitude.

NARASINHA[1]

Bannerji writes of Narasinha:

"Narasinho vivrttāsyo vāmorukṣatadānavah
Tadvakṣo dārayanmālī sphuraccakragadādharah."[2]

"According to the 'Matsyapurāṇa', Narasinha has eight hands."

Narasinham tu karttavyam bhujāṣṭakasamanvitam.
Raudram sinhāsanam tadvidāritamukhekṣaṇam
Stabdhapīnasatakarnam dārayantam diteh sutam.

- Matsyapurāṇa, Chap. 260
Verses 31-2.

"In the only specimen (Plate XLVI c. from Bihar) in the Indian Museum we find four hands. Hiranyakaśipu, the son of Diti, is placed on the left thigh and the god is tearing his bowels with two hands. To his right we find Laksmī standing with a lotus in her left hand and a fly-whisk in her right."[3]

The whole composition is a happy blend of compassion for the upright and destruction of the wicked. The figure of Narasinha is a wonderful illustration of the spirit of revenge that prevailed among

---

(1) EISMS. Plate XLVI c.

(2) AP. Chap. 49. Verse 4.

(3) EISMS. pp. 104-5.

the common people who cared more - as they do even now - for the destruction of the enemy than his reformation and acceptance into the fold of society as an equal member. As has been said, each image in stone is an image of the mental state of the artist who fashioned it. And so far as the artist himself was a product of his age, his work reflects the spirit of that age and the mind of the people. In Narasinha, Man again turns to animal symbolism. Viṣnu appears on earth as the divine Man-lion to avenge human arrogance. This conception of human endeavour in association with the avenging god in animal form is the product of the Indian realization that man's claim to superiority over the rest of creation is vain, and that, if he means to avoid the misery of real life, he must shake off arrogance and be prepared to act in unison with other living beings. The story of the Narasinha Avatāra is the most dramatic of all the Purāṇic tales of the incarnation of the Saviour. It is particularly popular in Southern India, where it is prominent in the dance-drama.

VĀMANA[1]

Bannerji describes the Vāmana Avatāra as follows:

"In the Indian Museum specimen, we find the god we four hands. One foot is lifted upwards to cover the heaven. The deity holds a mace in the upper right hand and a wheel in the left, while the lower right is placed on the thigh, and the lower left hand

---

(1) EISMS. Plate XLVII d. Vāmana as Trivikrama from Bihar.

holds a conch. On the pedestal we find a horse tied to a 'yūpa'. A small bas-relief is placed above the pedestal. Here we find the dwarf confronting the King Bali who holds a vase in his right hand, from which he appears to be pouring out water, thus bestowing the three worlds on the dwarf. To Bali's left stands a male. This is apparently his priest trying to dissuade him by holding his left hand. Behind them stands a smaller male figure holding an umbrella over the head of the king. This image represents the Trivikrama form of the dwarf incarnation which is so common at Bādāmī in the Bijapur district of Bombay."(1)

In addition to the above, the 'Agnipurāṇa' has another conception of Vāmana with a staff in one hand and an umbrella in the other:

"Chatrī daṇḍī Vāmanah syādathavā syādcaturbhujah"(2)

The images of Vāmana reflect the same theme as the other Avatāras of Viṣṇu. The Vāmana, the god in the form of a dwarf, was the symbol of humanity dwarfed before the spectre of an impending catastrophe. But the spirit of Man asserts itself, refusing to surrender to disaster. Though he appears as a dwarf, the living god encompasses the whole of creation, and is manifest lord of all when at the end of the story

---

(1) EISMS. p. 105.

(2) AP. Cahp. 49. Verse 5.

he throws off his disguise. This Avatāra is of considerable interest, for it derives directly from the Vedic epithets Urukrama and Trivikrama which are applied to the god in the Vedic hymn.(1) He is described as "the Wide Strider" and "the Three Strider". By origin undoubtedly a sun god, Viṣnu acquired humanity in his incarnation. The myth as told in the Purāṇas is full of subtlety.

Bali belonged by birth to the enemy race of Rākṣasas, the daityas of the Āryans. But he was no tyrant, no enemy of the gods. On the contrary he was the friend and benefactor of mankind. A mighty king by position, he was humble in his behaviour, living according to the Vedāntic ideal of 'Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma'. He was inspired by the true philosophical spirit of detachment. The glories of a paramount king, the pleasures of affluence had no charm for him. His possessions were his only to give away and not to enjoy himself. A better character can hardly be found in the whole literature of the Purāṇas. Even so he must be brought low, for he belongs to another race, and, if not by force, by deceit. The validity of the icon lies in the conception of the all-embracing power of Viṣnu. The story is an excuse for embodying this aspect of the god.

---

(1) Viṣnu hymn in Macdonnell's Vedic Reader.

ŚIVA

No other deity is conceived of in such a variety of ways as Śiva. He is essentially a popular deity, caste having far less influence in his worship than on the worship of other gods and goddesses. The cause of his popularity is still not clear. His dual origin in the Aryan and Dravidian traditions may be taken as a background to the whole development of his cult. He is worshipped in a hundred forms often very similar to each other, but often seemingly contradictory.

"The most popular form of the combination of Śiva and Pārvatī is that in which Śiva is seated with Pārvatī on his lap. Such images are found in all parts of the Eastern provinces. The accompanying illustrations show five specimens; one stone image from Bihar(1), on from the North(2), one from the East,(3) and one from South Western Bengal(4), as well as a bronze image from Northern Bengal.(5) The following description of these images is found in the Matsyapurāṇa$:

Caturbhujam dvibāhum vā jaṭābhārendubhūṣitam
Locanatrayasaṁyuktamumaikaskandhapāṇinam.
Dakṣiṇenotpalam śūlam vāme kucabhare karam
Dvīpicarmaparīdhānam nānāratnopaśobhitam
Supratistham suveṣam ca tathārdhendukṛtāsanam
Vāme tu samsthitā devī tasyorau bāhugūhitā
Śirobhūṣaṇasaṁyuktairalakairlalitāsanā
Sabalikakarṇavatīlalāṭatilakojjvalā.

---

(1) EISMS. Plate LV a
(2) " " LV b
(3) " " LIV d
(4) " " LV d
(5) " " LXXI b

Maṇikuṇḍalasaṁyuktā karṇikābharaṇā kvacit.
Harakeyūrabahulā Haravaktrāvalokinī
Vāmāsam devadevasya spṛśanti līlayā tatah
Dakṣinam tu bahih kṛtvā bāhum dakṣiṇatastathā.
Skandhe vā dakṣiṇe kukṣau spṛśantyaṅgulijaih
kvacit
Vāme tu darpaṇam dadyātutpalam vā suśobhanam.

- 'Matsyapurāṇa' Chap. 260. Verses 12-19.

"The attributes are not distinguishable in the metal images owing to corrosion, but in the image from Bihar we find that Śiva has four hands. He holds a trident (triśūla) in one right hand, while the other touches Pārvatī's chin. One of the left hands grasps the breast of the goddess, while the second is held aloft. Pārvatī encircles Śiva's neck with her right hand, while she holds a mirror (darpaṇa) in her left."(1)

The images of Śiva and Pārvatī, in this form which is known as Umāsahita, mark as development of Magadha art distinct from the representations of Viṣṇu as Vāsudeva, Varāha, Narasinha and Vāmana. If art reflects life, as it does, it may seem strange that the sexual should have persisted side by side with the dominant idea of the saviour god. Religion in India is usually identified with asceticism, but in this icon and in the lesser mithuna figures asceticism is abandoned for a frank naturalism. The development must not be confused with the crudities of the Tantra. The origins of these charming groups must be sought in the purely decorative panels of Gupta

---

(1) EISMS. pp. 111-2.

doorways and in the decorative details of the Ajantā frescoes. In this icon, the great god and goddess are shown in marital bliss.

Magadha had its aristocracy and among them were patrons of art. These had gathered sufficient wealth to employ the poor artist who 'does not live by bread alone but ... (who) cannot live without it'.(1) The livelihood of the artist depends on his patron, whose 'whim must be fulfilled'.(2) Aristocratic landlords were not wanting and among them luxury was not unknown. The development of a sexual literature in medieval India reflects the atmosphere in which the wealthy lived in the midst of poverty. The artist in Magadha was no moralist, he was just a craftsman taking orders from the people who could pay for his products. He had no choice of his own in developing the traditional themes of his art, which was always the prerogative of the wealthy patron. If the patron was the private priest of a village temple, the demand would almost always be for an image of the benevolent deity, portrayed as taking the helpless devotee under his protection and destroying the wicked. The saviour god was the god of the simple village folk. The rich on the other hand did not need the benevolence of a compassionate deity. Religion, when it was not professional priest-craft, was diversion, a pastime.

---

(1) Codrington, K. de B.: 'Indian Art'. Faber, London. p. 159.

(2) " " "

And for that purpose what could be more appropriate than gods and goddesses portrayed as the care-free presiding deities of a heaven, modelled on the worldly riches of a kingly palace. In the wall-recesses of the bed-chambers, on the gate-ways, everywhere on the walls of palaces, and in the great temples these ever youthful, for they were carved in stone, unchanging heavenly beings in dalliance were represented. They are the product of the brighter side of contemporary life, the gods of the few, not of the many.

The images of Naṭarāja, Śiva portrayed as Lord of the Dance, so common in South India, are rarely met with in North India. So far as Magadha is concerned, none has yet been found there. That 'many images of the Dancing Śiva have...been discovered from the south-eastern districts of Bengal'[1] is due to the fact that during the days of the later Pālas, invaders from the south did enter Bengal and failing to penetrate into Dakṣiṇa Rāḍhā and Magadha under the Pālas, made their way further to the east and established their sway over the areas now lying in the districts of Dacca and Tippera. In their original home in the South, they had been the worshippers of Naṭarāja and now that they were in Bengal, they made a place for their own god in the local pantheon.

---

(1) Bhattasali, Nalinikanta: Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculpture in the Dacca Museum. Dacca. 1929. pp. 110-11.

The dance of Śiva is conceived of in no light mood. It is the primeval force itself in action. The Universal Soul is astir to destroy the elements that disturb the equilibrium of existence. Śiva in this role may be likened to Viṣnu in his incarnations as Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nṛsinha, Vāmana etc. The goddesses Durgā, Kālī and Cāmuṇḍā in the North are concerned in the same fashion. Śiva as a benevolent deity is said to have originated in the pre-Aryan culture of India. It would seem that this protecting deity of the non-Aryans appealed to the Aryans, who had nothing of his kind in their own pantheon, and as if to counteract the wanton behaviour of the Vedic Rudra, the god that caused tears (Sans.: 'Rud' to weep), they brought the two together, uniting them into a single deity, Śiva, the good, the protector. In Naṭarāja, while we get the energy of Rudra in full force, the whole purpose of the movement, the dance, is in accordance with the conception of Śiva. The racial element in the south, being mainly Dravidian, the popularity of Naṭarāja there may well have its root in the old Dravidian culture, where Śiva was, it seems, the chief deity. The Dravidian origin of Śiva may again help us to explain the fact that in the North, including Magadha, it is Śiva more than any other deity who is prominent on the occasions of festivals like the Holī, when people derived from all castes indulge in playing pranks with persons attired as Śiva and Pārvatī.

But Śiva, in his terrible aspect, is also known and worshipped in Magadha and Mithilà as Bhairava (the terrible) "with round tawny eyes, with a big belly, with a face terrible on account of tusks, with wide nostrils, with a garland of Kapālas (skulls), awe-inspiring, frightfully adorned on all sides with snake ornaments, frightening the goddess Pārvatī by snake and with elephant's skin as the upper garment, resembling in colour the water-charged cloud and surrounded by many arms decorated with all sorts of weapons bearing a likeness to big trees - suspicious having sharp nails. The figures, swaying (with its right hip) is said to be of Bhairava[1], while shown frontally it is called Mahākāla.

Of Bhairava, Gopinatha Rao writes: "But the goddess should be placed on the left hand and in the hand should be held a snake. The goddess Pārvatī should not be (in front of him) and she should not be white or red."[2]

As usually represented, Bhairava might well be called 'grotesque'. The literary texts make it plain that his appearance is not intended to be pleasant. It is what it was meant to be, terrible, full of terror. The Indian mind, realising the futility of beauty without vitality, Indian art consistently rejected symetrical beauty. It seeks to

---

(1) cf. Gopinatha Rao: Elements of Hindu Iconography 1914-16. Vol. II, pt. 1, plate XII, figs. 51-3.

(2) VD. p. 84.

make apparent the power of the protecting god as an essential aspect of his god-head. Sun is both protector and destroyer, and is shown holding the weapons of destruction. He holds the snake and noose, and wears a garland of skulls, relics of the foes he destroys.

DURGĀ

Among the various forms of Pārvatī and Durgā worshipped in the eastern provinces of Northern India the most popular are the eight-armed ('aṣṭa-bhujā'), the ten-armed ('daśabhujā') and the twelve-armed ('dvādaśabhujā'). All of these forms belong to the species of 'Mahiṣamardinī' or 'The slayer of the buffalo-demon'. The worship of the eight and the twelve-armed varieties is now obsolete; they have been superseded by the ten-armed variety. But the specimens discovered in Bengal and Bihar and the eastern part of the United Provinces prove that like the Punjab, Rajputana, and the Deccan, in the beginning,'Śakta' worship included the worship and the representation of normal forms of this goddess with two or four hands. At Bhumrā in the Nagod state of Central India (5th century) and at Bādāmī in the Bijapur district of the Bombay Presidency (6th century) the earlier forms of Mahiṣamardinī possess four arms only, so also in eastern India the earlier forms of the goddess only four arms. In these provinces the older types, instead of being superseded, survived till the Muslim period, indeed we find four-armed female figures in

almost every part of the country. The worship of the eight, ten and twelve-armed figure of Pārvatī was therefore contemporary with the four and six-armed varieties. The wide development of Śaktė worship in the eastern provinces of Northern India caused the production of a larger variety of images of this particular type. Consequently we find more varieties of this icon than in others of the orthodox or the Brāhmanical pantheon. Subsequently the worship of certain varieties of this kind appears to have been discontinued and replaced by other forms of the goddess.(1)

Mahiṣamardinī portrays Durgā in the act of slaying the buffalo-demon, Mahiṣa. This icon is, indeed, founded upon an important fact. The buffalo is especially associated with the village-cults of southern India, in which it, or its substitute, the goat, is the normal sacrifical offering. It is especially prominent in the Dasarā festival rites. The fact that Durgā is worshipped as the buffalo-slayer indicates Brāhmanical criticism of such wide-spread unorthodox rites, which must be non-Aryan in origin.

The cult of the Śakti under the forms of Durgā, Kālī and Caṇḍī owes its origin to the same psychology that dreamed of a Vāsudeva (Viṣṇu) with

---

(1) EISMS. pp. 114-5.

śaṅkha, cakra, gadā and padma; a Varāha bearing the Mother Earth on his tusks from out of primeval flood; a Nṛsinha tearing the bowels of Hiraṇyakaśipu, the demon; a Vāmana, the dwarf, subduing Bali, the monarch of the three worlds, or a Bhairava (Śiva) subduing evil with his snake and his terrible look, and his neckless of skulls. Only the feeling here is more intense. The orthodox approval of the worship of the Great Goddess stands in direct contradiction to the common status of women in India. Woman in Indian poetry is not associated with power. She was tender of heart as of form, an object of love as a bridge or of regard as a mother. Society was ruled by masculine activity; woman was more a prize than a partner. While her man went to battle, she kept 'his' home looking after 'his' son who would fulfill the necessary rites on his death. Now, however, when Man had lost faith in himself, his sense of superiority over woman, the cause of his being, disappeared. He stood before the goddess as a child raising his tearful face towards his mother, ever loving, ever watchful and anxious for the welfare of her own offspring. For long he has exerted and failed. She is the goddess, the mother of all, bearing the life-giving milk in her breasts and in her heart, the solace for the anguished soul. She is the mighty Being, wielding terrible weapons in her many arms, inflicting fatal blows on the enemy of her children. Even in the midst of blood and destruction, the mighty

Mother wears a gracious look in the eyes of her worshippers.

The same conception of a mighty Mother, terrible on account of her anger, careless of her appearance, out to destroy the evil ones, is manifest in Cāmuṇḍā[1] and Kālī. In these goddesses, the work of Durgā is repeated with different hosts of the evil ones. These images have been claimed as symbols of abstruse metaphysical categories.[2] We do not question the truth of assertions to the effect that "Kālī...is the personification of the Supreme Power which withdraws everything into Herself at the dissolution of the Universe".[3] We only hold that these metaphysical assumptions are not the results of the growth of Indian philosophy. No thought can grow independently of the mind which gives it birth, and no mind is free from the influence of period and environment. The radical part played by these goddesses in Indian religion cannot be ~~deemed~~ ignored. The development of their cults in Pāla times must be considered in parallel with the contemporary cult of Viṣṇu as the saviour god, and the rise and fall of the great Bodhisattvas and Tārās of the Mahāyāna tradition.

---

(1) EISMS. Plate LVIII. 6.

(2) Havell: Indian Sculpture and Painting, 1928. p. 37.

(3) Ibid.

BUDDHISM

As we pass from Brāhmanic images to the Buddhistic pantheon, we find the same intense feeling of suffering under want and aggression; only here it is, perhaps, more controlled. Buddhism preserved its basis of subdued emotion, its acceptance of suffering and the relentless pursuit of the way to freedom from the bonds of suffering.

It is commonly said that Buddhism owed its propagation and strength to royal patronage. This contention, which is by no means true, is reminiscent of the traditional Brāhmanic misrepresentation of Buddhism. From the days of the Buddha in the sixth century B.C. down to Harṣa in the first half of the seventh century A.D., no king professed an exclusive faith in the ways of the Buddha. Aśoka in the third century B.C. and Harṣa in the seventh century A.D. did patronise Buddhism, but their patronage was not exclusively confined to the followers of Tathāgata. The Jainas, Tīrthikas and Ājīvakas in the case of Aśoka and the Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas and Śūdras in the case of Harṣavardhana, were also not treated disadvantageously. The treatment of all these faiths was to a great extent impartial, so much so, that it is not easy to identify the real religious convictions of these monarchs. A strong, benevolent ruler must take into account the desires of his people, and eager to see them content and peaceful, he adopts a way of life that does not offend any one and may be of help

to every one in his pursuit of a peaceful, happy life. It was no king, not even Aśoka or Harṣa, that gave establishment to Buddhism, but the people, who saw their last hope in it, embraced it and made it the real, popular religion as against Brāhmanism, the religion of the privileged ones. Its advantages were many. It cut across the caste-system based on the racial arrogance of the Brāhmans and the social rigidity of Brāhmanism. The lower section of the population turned to it as they did in the south at a later date to Christianity. If ever a people created religion by their faith in it, it was Buddhism. Aśoka and Harṣa could not but respect the faith of the people, the majority of whom had come to regard Buddha as their redeemer. This emotional element of salvation must have been present in the popular Buddhism from the very beginning.

BUDDHA

Nothing could portray the life of the people in Magadha in the post-Harṣa period better than the disconsolate figure of Yaśodharā, with Rāhula standing by her side , kneeling before the Buddha, carved in relief on the outer wall of the basement of the great tower at Nālandā. More than two hundred years before the carving of this sculpture at Nālandā, another artist painted the same characters, the Buddha, Yaśodharā and Rāhula, on a monastery cave-wall at Ajantā,(1)

(1) Grffiths: 'Ajanta'.

more than a thousand miles away to the south-west. The persistence of the subject is significant. In the painting at Ajantā, Buddha stands before Yaśodharā ready to receive alms from her. Yaśodharā is urging Rāhula forward to place the gift in the begging-bowl of the Buddha, his father. Her hands are busy with the child, while her eyes are turned towards her Lord. The sorrow of separation from her husband that had darkened her days for so long, subdued by the promise of universal redemption from all pain through the efforts of her Lord, who had renounced her and the pleasure of a royal life that all beings should be free. At Nālandā Yaśodharā weeps at the feet of her Lord, like a child that has lost his mother. The words of Draupadī in the Mahābhārata, weeping at the feet of Kṛṣṇa when he went to console her in her banishment might well be put in her mouth:

> Na me patayo santi na pitā na ca vāndhavāh
> Na me bhrātaro santi naiva tvam Madhusūdana. (1)

In both the cave-painting and the Nālandā sculpture, the Buddha is unmoved. The Indian genius preserves the conception of peace and redemption in the face of life's hard realities. It is unfortunate that while we remember the names of the Indian teachers who spoke their minds through words, we forget those of the artists who expressed themselves through their hands

---

(1) Mahābhārata. Vanaparva. Chap. Verse

working with the brush or chisel.

An even more poignant event in the life story of the Buddha than his return home, is his passing away at Kusīnārā at the age of eighty. The Mahāparinirvāṇa is another great theme in the sculpture of Magadha. In the well known sculpture in the Stuart-Bridge collection (British Museum)[1], "the Buddha is lying stiff, on a couch placed between two sāla trees, on his right side, with one leg resting on the other. The heavenly music sounded in the sky is indicated by two pairs of hands issuing from above and playing on a drum and cymbals on the top of the black slab. The face of the Buddha expresses absorption in meditation (dhyāna) before his final passing away. The five shaven-headed mourning monks show varieties of posture and gesture. The monk to the extreme right is sitting mournfully by the couch on the earth, his drooping head resting in his left hand. The second monk sits with his right hand on his breast, evidently beating it in grief. The third monk is sitting by the couch with his back turned outward. The fourth, about to stumble, holds the couch with his hands. The fifth monk, probably representing Ānanda, who attended the Buddha in his last days, is sitting at the feet of the master with joined palms and mournful countenance. There is movement in the drooping branches of the sāla trees and the hands

---

(1) Ramaprasad Chanda: Medieval Indian Sculpture in the British Museum. London. 1936. pp. 52-53.

playing on the musical instruments. The Buddhist creed is inscribed on the back slab in characters assignable to the tenth century A.D."[1]

We have not chosen this particular piece of sculpture for its technical excellence. Indeed, we come across far better executions of the same subject in the earlier Gandhāra art.[2] We only intend to stress the point that the sense of grief finds an expression in Magadhan art. This subject is an established motive of Indian Buddhist art, but its popularity in the art of Magadha at this period is significant. The treatment makes the reason clear. A wealth of feeling is poured into the traditional mould. No artist is ever attracted to a theme in the legend, tradition or literature of his people unless his emotion, which is in the long run the emotion of his people, can speak through it. The greater the artist, the larger the amount of social feeling included in and expressed by his work.

The depiction of unrelieved grief runs counter to the Brāhmanic tradition in art, literature and even philosophy established through the ages. This Brāhmanic attitude is strikingly similar to the Hellenic. This is true, of course, more in the case of sculpture than literature in which the Greek tradition stands nearer to the Buddhist conception

---

(1) Ibid. Plate XIII.

(2) A. Foucher

of life than its Brāhmanic counterpart. Gandhāra put the Buddhistic interpretation of life in a sculptural form which was borrowed from Greece. While the Greeks were producing their sculpture and pottery, they also produced, or rather created, tragic drama. Their life, at any rate in Athens, was bound up with the writing and performance of the great tragic plays of their national festivals. But this tragic instinct flowed out through a parallel channel, and did not dominate the realms of sculpture and painting which continued to present a gay, untrammelled life. So many influences are at work at the same period or in different spheres that it is futile to try to trace the origin of a culture-pattern to a single source. It is difficult to say how the descendants of the Mauryan artists in Magadha, who fashioned the bold figures like the Didāraganj Yakṣi[1] would have reacted to the pattern of life under the Pālas, in the absence of that other stream of tradition in art that had travelled to them seven centuries earlier from the west, through Gandhāra (100 B.C.), Mathurā (Kuṣāṇa, 100 A.D.) and Benares (400 A.D.). There is, therefore, no easy proof for our general proposition that art is a reflection of the realities of life. It is not philosophy that guides a people's activities in art. Nor does philosophy govern life. It is the conditions

---

(1) In the Patna Museum. A.K. Coomaraswamy: A History of Indian and Indonesian Art. London. 1927. plate

of living that mould men's behaviour. Tradition does influence the form of that behaviour, but the quality of it is conditioned by the environment in which they live and act.

DHYĀNĪ BUDDHAS

The Dhyānī Buddhas are five in number to which a sixth, Vajrasattva, is sometimes added. Though some of them were known before A.D. 700, the idea of the full five seems to have developed in the first half of the 8th century. That the five Dhyānī Buddhas might have owed their origin to the theory of the eternity of the five senses, seems to be borne out by a passage in the Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa of Āryadeva. Vajrasattva, the sixth Dhyānī Buddha who is generally regarded as the priest of the five Dhyānī Buddhas, is an embodiment of the five skandhas collectively and is undoubtedly a later addition to the pantheon of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The six Dhyānī Buddhas, in order of their position, are Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi and Vajrasattva.(1)

BODHISATTVAS

The Bodhisattvas are, like the Dhyānī Buddhas, five in number - to which a sixth is also added. It is clear that it is the duty of Maitreya

---

(1) B. Bhattacharya: Buddhist Iconography Oxford. 1925, pp. 1-2.

to continue the work of the earthly Buddha for the cessation of human misery. It would seem that just as the Dhyānī Buddhas are added to the old traditional series of earthly Buddhas, ~~to~~ the Dhyānī Bodhisattvas are an extension of the function of Maitreya, being regarded as emanations from the Dhyānī Buddhas. Each of them is attached to a Dhyānī Buddha as shown in the table thus:(1)

Dhyānī Buddha	Bodhisattva
Vairocana	Samantabhadra
Akṣobhya	Vajrapāṇi
Ratnasambhava	Ratnapāṇi
Amitābha	Padmapāṇi
Amoghasiddhi	Viśvapāṇi
Vajrasattva	Ghaṇṭāpāṇi

AVALOKITEŚVARA (PADMAPĀṆI)

It is interesting to note that the laws of the anthropomorphic embodiment of a Supreme Master of the Universe works as effectively in the case of atheistic Buddhism as in that of orthodox, Brāhmanism. The creation of a god or God is no choice of the people that worship him. The human mind works to a pattern in which at certain stages in time and in space, certain images emerge and become traditional. Around them hover the manifold

---

(1) Ibid. pp. 8-9

associations of literature and cult. The meaning of the image is compounded of all these things, but it remains the product of the hand and eye of the practising artist.

Much has been said by authoritative writers on the subject of the morals of Buddhist monks in post-Harṣa India, including Magadha. Evil practices associated with the Tantra had crept into the ranks of the Order by the end of the eleventh century. This much is evident. But the preceding three centuries of scrupulous observance of the rules of behaviour established by the Buddha himself more than a thousand years ago, have so far earned little or no appreciation for the zeal and piety of the monks, who had to face the increasing difficulties of life in a fast disintegrating society.

The analysis of the Sādhanas proves that in the Buddhistic ritual, the different species of Bodhisattavas are classified according to the five divine or 'Dhyānī' Buddhas. Thus Lokanātha, Lokeśvara or Avalokiteśvara is an emanation of Amitābha. It is Amitābha who is the presiding deity of Buddhism in the modern age. His period of domination over the universe began at the demise of Gautama Buddha and will end with the appearance of Maitreya Bodhisattva. The number of multiplications of this Buddhistic deity can be judged from the fact

that at least 108 different figures of him are still worshipped in the Machchendra Vahal in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. In the Eastern School of Medieval Sculpture figures of the Bodhisattva Lokanātha[1] predominate over all others, but the specimens discovered do not include all the 108 different Nepalese varieties. He is to be distinguished at once by the presence of the divine Buddha Amitābha in his headdress and by the lotus in his left hand. The number of his hands varies and so do the attributes in each and every different case.[2]

As against Buddha, Avalokiteśvara is obviously no historical personage. He is the pure creation of faith. Though Buddha himself has been portrayed in later Buddhist literature or even in the Brāhmanic Purāṇas as a perfect being, an incarnation of the Supreme Being Himself, his human birth and death, his life of struggles and anxieties, all stress his humanity. He showed the way and preached the great truths. Now a human teacher, however great, was insufficient. Teaching was not enough. Redemption was necessary. A human teacher, even of the calibre of a Buddha, was too weak to bring about the cessation of pain. There must be, therefore, another Being, a divine Saviour, a Being powerful enough to defy in his own case not only temptations, but also death

---

(1) Ibid. Plate XXXIII. 6.

(2) EISMS. p. 87.

in order that all in need of his help might see their way to salvation. The earthly Buddha was not dislodged from the pantheon. He was given the proud but passive position of the Supreme Lord. The active office of salvation was taken over by Avalokiteśvara who had earned the right to Nirvāṇa but who refused to enter it before the last of all suffering beings. Such a deity, indeed, held out the promise of an existence free from anguish.

From Buddha, through Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara, to Mañjuśrī and Tārā runs the long process of mental effort at working out the image of a real saviour. The Buddhist sculptor still met the demand for images of Śākyamuni. But the great teacher had come and gone, followed by other great ones one after another, and man's lot was no better for their efforts; rather the passage of time had only added to life's agonies. Therefore re-adjustments, first in his mind and then in his objects of worship, must take place if he still cared for salvation. The mere resistance to temptations and practical wisdom of the Buddha is expanded and embraced by the divine chants of Avalokiteśvara. Even this was not sufficient. Another saviour is to come after Avalokiteśvara. He is Maitreya, and he comes to fulfil the promise of Avalokiteśvara. So the fleeting hope is tenaciously pursued. After that, patience of the miserable man reaches its limit. It is significant, indeed, that Mañjuśrī and Tārā, in her numerous forms, hold a sword

in their hands. These divine emanations take up the Brāhmanic weapon discarded fourteen hundred years ago through the teaching of the earthly Buddha, to defend their devotees against a heartless Destiny.

The basis of our interpretation of the Magadhan sculptor's psychology as based upon fear, revenge or escape, is provided by the figure of the starving human being cut on the pedestals of many images of Avalokiteśvara. Scholastic writers of contemporary date and modern critics have failed to describe this figure properly. The body reduced to a skeleton by starvation, the figure is reminiscent of Sūcīmukha, 'the needle-faced one'. This dramatic figure looks longingly at the deity and with trembling hands stretches forward to receive the hoped for gifts from the great Saviour. It presents concrete evidence of the economic condition of the people in the post-Harṣa era. The 'Sādhanamālā'[1], written by monks who may never themselves have experienced the pinch of hunger too describes Avalokiteśvara in his role as the supplier of food to the starving:

> "Karavigalatpiyūṣadhārābhyavahararasikam tadadhah samāropitordhvamukham mahākukṣimatisitivarṇṇam sūcīmukham tarpayantam." (from whose hand flows nectar; below whom is set Sūcīmukham receiving nectar in his mouth).

---

(1) Vol. I. Baroda. 1925. pp. 39-40.

Of the Buddhist images carved in Magadha from the seventh to the tenth century, those of Avalokiteśvara are the most numerous. A large number of these images bear the sūcīmukha figure on their pedestals. When we come across this figure of Starvation on images in stone from Nālandā or Bihar, and in bronze from Kurkihar[1] (Gaya), we cannot treat the motive as a mere isolated instance. Constant warfare among the chiefs of the different principalities had ruined the economic stability of society. The people, except the fortunate few, struggled hopelessly against a crushing poverty.

MAITREYA

We have seen how faith in the human Buddha gave way to faith in the heavenly Buddha, the Supreme Being, wielding absolute power over all and everything, and in the saviour Bodhisattvas.

Maitreya iconographically belongs to an older substratum than the other divine Bodhisattvas, for his figures are common in Gandhāra. He appears as the perfect Bodhisattva, in royal dress. As such he is directly remiscent of the figures of Prince Siddhārtha in the palace scenes which the Gandhāran

---

(1) K.P. Jayaswal: JISOA. 1934. p. 75. Plate XXXIV. Fig. 4.

artists loved to portray. The rise of the other divine Bodhisattvas must have detracted from his standing, but he survives as embodying the image of the Heavenly King. If Avalokita offers suffering humanity release in terms of the Vedānta, Maitreya offers his worshippers the prospect of heavenly enjoyment akin to that of Viṣṇu's Vaikuṇṭha.

The archaeology of the Dhyānī Bodhisattvas is to be sought at Ajantā, Aurangabad and the early caves at Ellura, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi and Mañjuśrī appear in pairs as dvārapālas (door-keepers). In the Gupta structural temples, the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā appear as dvārapālas on either side of the lintel. In the caves quoted, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi and Mañjuśrī seems to be always associated with the earthly Buddha as the central object of worship in the shrine. This suggests that the theory of emanation of these divine Bodhisattvas from the Dhyānī Buddhas is a later manipulation. This at any rate is clear, that the Bodhisattvas Ratnapāṇi, Vajrapāṇi, Samantabhadra, and Ghaṇṭāpāṇi do not appear in the 5th and 6th centuries.(1) Codrington, in his 'Study of Medieval Indian Sculpture'(2), observes that "The Śāstras are doubtless a late summary of what may be called the medieval tradition, but in detail with regard to the iconography and technical analysis

---

(1) Burgess: Cave Temples. pp. 239,337,342,375,380.

(2) p. 16.

of mouldings and pillars, they cannot be applied to the earlier work. They are concerned, not with the period of the great cave-temples, but with the 10th and 11th centuries, the period of the great structural temples."

Banerjea writes: "Maitreya, the Messiah of Buddhism, is rarely met with in the Eastern School. There are two forms of this Bodhisattva in the 'Sādhanas'. When he is an attendant of the Buddha, he has two hands and holds a fly-whisk in his right hand and a branch of a Nāgakesara in his left hand. The collection in the Indian Museum contains two separate images of Maitreya with two hands, in both of which there is a 'chaitya' in his headdress and in one of them there are two four-armed female figures in attendance upon him. In these two images the Bodhisattva holds a branch of the Nāgakesara in his proper left hand, while the right hand is in the posture of blessing ('varadamudrā').(1) The 'Sādhanas' describe another Maitreya with three faces and four hands but no specimen of this particular type has been discovered amongst specimens of the Eastern School of Medieval Sculpture."(2)

MAÑJUŚRĪ

Mañjuśrī is not included in the lists of Dhyānī Buddhas, but Banerjea holds that after the

---

(1) EISMS. Plate Xa.

(2) EISMS. p. 89.

Lokeśvaras and Maitreya the most important group of male-deities consists of the various forms of Mañjuśrī. This Bodhisattva is known by a variety of names in the 'Sādhanas'; such as Mañjuśrī, Mañjuvara, Mañjughosha, Mañjudeva, Vāgiśvara, Mañjukumāra etc.(1) One of his forms, Dharmadhātu-Vāgiśvara, is said to have "four faces and eight arms, and holds in the right hand the bow (dhanuh), the snare (pāśa), the volume of the prajñāpāramitā, and the bell (ghaṇṭā); and in the left hand, the arrow (śara), the elephant-goard (aṅkuśa), the sword (asi) and the thunder-bolt (vajra)."(2) Other forms are Vajrānaṅga, with one head and six hands, holding bow, arrow, sword etc., and Nāmasaṅgīti-Mañjuśrī with the prajñāpāramitā , sword, bow and arrow.(3)

The name (Mañjuśrī - the lovely image) and form (with bow, arrow and sword) of this deity raise a question about the aesthetic sense of the Magadhan sculptor more than a thousand years ago. Bow, arrow and sword, the weapons of destruction, remind one of terror and death. Did he then see beauty in association with terror and destruction so that he calls the deity with the deadly weapons in his hands, out to destroy the enemies, the 'lovely angel', Mañjuśrī ? Can it ever be possible ? Is there no self-contradiction in a conception of beauty together with terror and destruction ?

---

(1) Ibid. p. 90
(2) Ibid ; BI. pp. 17-19
(3) EISMS. pp. 90 ff.

That which does us good we call beautiful. Beauty consists in no mere form. It is inseparably linked up with the utility that we derive from the object. It is our attraction towards the object that makes us call it beautiful. We are attracted only when we see our 'good' in it. That 'good' may be positive - viz. to get pleasure out of use of it - or negative - viz. to be relieved of a state of suffering. Consciously or unsconsciously we are driven to the conclusion that no form is independent of its content and that it is the latter rather than the former which provides the basis of judgment over the object.

Besides Mañjuśrī, there are among the male deities Caṇḍamahāroṣana and Heruka that illustrate the elements of terror and revenge in the sculpture of Magadha. Caṇḍamahāroṣana has a well-built body with a sword, a rope in his hands, with blood-shot eyes and a look of consuming anger:

"Avaninihitajānuh savyahastaikakhaḍgah
Taḍitarakaramuṣṭau tarjanīsaktapāśah.
Niviḍaghanaśarīraścaṇḍaruk caṇḍacakṣuh
Samayatu bhavavighnam vighnahantācaloyam."(1)

The image of Heruka we describe here does not belong to Magadha. It was discovered in Bengal which under the Pàlas formed a single territory with Magadha. Therefore it may well be taken as an illustration of the same theme as that of the images

---

(1) SM. Vol. I. p. 169.

of Mañjuśrī or Caṇḍamahārosana. Heruka is "a slender well-built deity dancing in the Ardhaparyaṅka attitude with the right leg placed on the left thigh. The face is rendered ferocious by the gaping mouth, canine teeth, blo d-shot eyes and anangry expression. The hair rises on the head in the shape of a flame of fire and forms the background for a tiny little figure sitting on the head. The right hand is broken from the shoulder and the arms together with the symbols have disappeared. But from the marks remaining on the stone it can be seen that the right hand was raised above menacingly in the attitude of throwing something. The left hand is also injured but it can be easily inferred from the marks on the stone that it rested against the breast and held something like a vessel. The figure wears a garland of severed heads and ornaments made of bones. From his left shoulder hangs a Khaṭvāṅga with flowing banners and small belles attached to the extremeties of the flags. The workmanship of the whole sculpture is simple but expressive, but the beauty is somewhat marred because of mutilation."(1)

JAMBHALA

Banerjea writes: "Jambhala is the Buddhist counterpart of the Brāhmanical Kuvera, the god of riches and the king of the Yakṣas. Kuvera and his consort Hārītī, both typifying wealth and abundance,

---

(1) SM. Vol. II. pp. CLXI-CLXII; plate X. face p. CLXI

were venerated in India from a very early period, and their figures, with Buddhist associations, have been discovered, in huge numbers, specially in the north-western part of India, among Gandhāra sculptures."(1)

Numerous examples of Jambhala figures have been discovered in the eastern provinces of Northern India, but by far the best and oldest specimen was discovered at Kurkihar in the Gaya district. This specimen was presented to the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1848 and transferred later on the Indian Museum at Calcutta. It has been wrongly described by Anderson as 'a seated figure of Gaṇeśa'. None of the other specimens, known to us, corresponds to the two 'Sādhanas' quoted by Bhattacharyya. One of them was dedicated at Nālandā in the tenth century A.D. The latest specimen in the Indian Museum collection is inscribed in the secret alphabet used by the Buddhist monks of Magadha, called 'Bhaikṣukīlipi' by Bühler."(2)

This deity has been described as follows: "The pleasing figure of Jambhala...is represented as a typical land-holder... It presents an easily excitable temperament with a flabby, phlegmatic constitution and bulging belly, but the figure is well decorated with jewellery and costly ornaments

---

(1) HB. p. 470 (J.N. Banerjea)

(2) EISMS. pp. 91-2. Plate XIII a.

and dress. The figure is one-faced and two-armed and holds very peculiar symbols in the hands, namely the citron in the right and the mongoose in the left; the mongoose vomits jewels as the result of the pressure exerted by the hands of the master... The image, therefore, represents the Buddhist god of wealth who is well-known among the Vajrayāna ascetics as the deity possessing extraordinary powers of conferring wealth on his devotees. He must have been extensively and eagerly worshipped by the poor ascetics to whom wealth was denied by Providence." (1)

In the sculpture of the North West, both at Mathura and in Gandhāra, Kuvera is prominent as the god of prosperity. He is represented much in the same manner as Jambhala, but holds a purse from which money spills out. This is the origin of Jambhala's mongoose, the form of the one symbol suggesting the other, a process common in iconographical sculpture. When this happens the simpler symbol is always amplified in the direction of the phantasic. Here art displays the same process of complication as contemporary literature.

It would seem, therefore, that the monks led a life of poverty, but were nevertheless anxious

---

(1) SM. Vol. II. pp. CLX-CLXI; plate IX facing p. CLX.
cf. "Bhagavantam Jambhalam dhyāyāt suvarṇavarṇam Lambodaram sarvālaṅkāradharam vāmadakṣiṇa-hastābhyām nakulibījapūrakadharam Ratna-sambhavamukutam utpalamālādharam."
- SM. Vol. II. p. 560 footnote.

for wealth, and believed that wealth could be obtained by the muttering of 'mantras' alone. Jambhala, the God of Wealth, was therefore, created by them and different images and mantras were invented in his name, and a large number of Sādhanas were devoted to his worship. It is, indeed, strange that the Indian tradition of asceticism should end by accepting the god of wealth.(1)

MĀRĪCĪ(2)

Of the female deities in the Buddhist pantheon, the most important are the Tārās, the female counterparts of the Bodhisattvas, but they are overshadowed by their male prototypes. They appear in sculpture as the presiding deities of benediction and understanding, compassion and concentration, which is all quite in accordance with the spirit of the Buddhist doctrine. Mārīcī, however, embodies the feelings of the common man, more concerned with the immediate problems of life than with hopes of ultimate redemption. She is for the Buddhists what Durgā, Kālī and Caṇḍī are for the followers of Brāhmanism, the Mother Goddess powerful to aid and protect. She bears in her right hands the sword ('asi'), the arrow ('śara') and a

---

(1) SM. Vol. II. p. LXXXV.
Footnote to the above: "cf. S. 293 Nirvāpayanti maṇikāñcanavastravarṣairdāridryadāvadahanam smṛtayopi Yasya."

(2) EISMS. pp. 97 ff.

needle, and in her left hands, the snare ('pāśa') and the bow ('dhanuh').

TĀRANĀTHA ON METAL CASTING

DHĪMĀN and BITPĀLO

Tāranātha has recorded that the art of metal-casting was founded in the eastern provinces by two men, father and son, named Dhīmān and Bitpàlo, who lived in Varendra (North Bengal) or Nālendra (Nālandā) during the reigns of Dharmapāla and Devapāla. Both of these artists are stated to have "produced many works in cast metal, as well as sculptures and paintings which resembled the works of the Nāgas. The father and son gave rise to distinct schools; as the son lived in Bengal, the cast images of gods produced by their followers were called gods of the Eastern style, whatever might be the birth-place of their actual designers."(1) Before the discoveries at Nālandā, specimens of metal-casting discovered in the eastern provinces were so few that it was not possible to discuss the artistic merits of these images with any degree of completeness. The discoveries at Nālandā have now made it possible to discuss the origin and development of metal-casting in the eastern provinces. We can now trace their evolution and decline from the evidence of inscribed specimens as well as dated images. The most important dated images are the images of Nāga

---

(1) Indian Antiquary, Vol. IV 1875, p. 102.

and Muṇḍeśvarī dedicated during the reign of Devapāla and discovered at Nālandā.(1) The next dated image is that of Pārvatī discovered at Bihar in the Patna district, which was dedicated at Uddaṇḍapura in the 54th year of the reign of Nārāyaṇapāla.(2) This, therefore, belongs to the first period of activity of the eastern school of medieval sculpture as proved by dated inscriptions and votive inscriptions on stone images. We find that in the cast metal figures, also, there is a corresponding increase of activity and rise in the standard of excellence of the work of this school, in this period.(3)

---

(1) Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey, Central Circle, for 1920-21. p. 19. plate Ib.

(2) Indian Antiquary, Vol. XLVII. 1918. p. 111. plate III a, b.

(3) EISMS. pp. 130-31.
Smith, V.A.: Early History of India, Oxford 1924. p. 417.

MITHILĀ and MAGADHA

700 A.D. - 1100 A.D.

CHAPTER VI

THE ARCHITECT

BODHGAYĀ

The site upon which the great temple of Bodhgayā stands is said to have been pointed out by Upagupta to Aśoka who gave 100,000 pieces of gold for the erection of buildings.(1) The site selected was near the small village of Uruvilwa which still exists under the name of Urel. In the Pālī chronicles the village is called Uruvelā. This place was then the residence of the eldest of the three Kāśyapa brothers, who was therefore known as Uruvilwa Kāśyapa. When Prince Śākya Sinha arrived there, "he went to the residence of Uruvilwa Kāśyapa who was a fire worshipper".(2) The nae of Uruvilwa is not mentioned by any of the Chinese pilgrims; but it is found repeatedly in the Buddhist chronicles of Ceylon.(3)

Cunningham says "All our authorities agree in referring the erection of the first Temple of Mahābodhi to the great king Aśoka. The old Burmese inscription(4) which records the successive repairs of

---

(1) Lalitavistara
(2) Hardy: Manual of Buddhism. p. 189.
(3) Cunningham: Mahābodhi. p. 2.
(4) Cunningham: Mahābodhi, pp. 75-77.
Epigraphica Indica, Vol. XI. p. 119
JRAS. 1913. p. 378.

the Temple, assigns the original building to Aśoka... Unfortunately, we possess no description of it save a brief mention by the pilgrim Heuen Tsiang who says that it was a small Vihāra and that Aśoka 'surrounded the Bodhi tree with a stone wall about 10 feet in height' which was still standing in A.D. 637 when he visited Mahābodhi. We learn further that the circuit of the Vajrāsan or holy area, in the middle of which stood the sacred Bodhi tree, was about 100 paces or 250 feet."(1) However, the sacred precincts mentioned by Cunningham cannot be traced today. Cunningham continues: "Fortunately amongst the bas-reliefs of the ruined Stūpa at Bhārhut there are two sculptured representations of Aśoka's temple with the holy pīpal tree behind it, one of which is duly labelled as 'Bhagavato Saka Munino Bodhi' or 'Bodhi Tree of the blessed Śākya Muni'. As the sculptures of the Bhārhut stūpa are certainly as old as B.C. 120 or 100, the Bas-reliefs must be tolerably faithful representations of the Temple, as accurate indeed as the skill of the artist was able to make them."(2) Cunningham's reference to 'Aśoka's temple' is perhaps a little misleading. The two Bhārhut representations show a small building whose dome is pierced by chaitya-windows through which emerge the branches of the sacred pīpal tree. Shrine would be a better description of the little building. Moreover, he does

---

(1) Cunningham: Mahābodhi, p. 4.

(2) Ibid.

not mention the representations of the Bodhi tree shrine on the eastern gateway of Sānchī which is dated in the first century B.C.[1] and corresponds closely with the Bhārhut versions.

It is not possible to identify the original site of the Bodhi tree shrine. It stands today on top of a high platform of bricks, probably of medieval origin, to the west of the great temple. Presumably the famous Vajrāsan which is mentioned below, was originally placed at the foot of the Bodhi tree, but the latter, in the course of centuries, may well have altered its position considerably.

The railing-pillars which are still standing and form an oblong enclosure, are sometimes dated before Bhārhut. Professor Cordington says: "The Bhārhut Bodhi-tree shrine relief does not in the least correspond with these Bodhgayā railing-pillars... These railing-pillars are a later addition. The style is more free than anything at Bhārhut and the scenes portrayed more complex. The nymph standing on a lotus-leaf with lotos stalks and flowers twining above her looks like a degernation of a Sānchī motive. The kneeling atlantes are also late and the bold animal-capitalled pillars."[2]

---

(1) Smith & Codrington: A History of Fine Art in India. Oxford 1930, p. 34, plates 12A, 13A

(2) Ancient India. London 1926. p. 24 (note 2)

Today the Temple of Bodhgayā is a great centre of Buddhist pilgrimage. It dominates the site as any European cathedral does the cathedral city. Cunningham says: "The history of Mahābodhi temple is written in the alterations and successive additions that were made to it. These different works are actual 'facts' that were revealed during the repair of the building. The chief alteration was the removal of the upper slab of the Vajrāsana throne from the inside to the outside of the temple. As this slab is sculptured on all four faces it must have been exposed to view on all four sides in an open building. Another later change was the elevation of the Bodhi tree from the ground level to the top of the basement, a rise of more than 24 feet. Other alterations were the successive changes in the level of the floors, both inside and outside, which were gradually raised from the time of Aśoka down to the last great restoration of the temple by the Burmese in the 11th century of the Christian era."(1)

The most prominent additions were the three great buttresses built against the back wall of the basement. These still exist in a ruined state; but they have become completely detached from the temple owing to their entire want of foundations. The lower courses were laid on the bare sand. Their

---

(1) Cunningham: Mahābodhi. p. 1

weight failed to withstand the resistless force of the growing roots of the pīpal tree, one of which had, in Cunningham's time, penetrated slantwise across one of the niche figures of Buddha and was as thick as a man's thigh. The actual gap amounted to over 6 inches. This gap was at some time filled with the crumbling remains of the back wall of the temple.

A striking addition to the temple must have been the front portico, which is described by Yuan Chwang as a pavilion of three storeys.(1) No remains of this work have survived, save the edges of the crumbling walls that were attached to the main building. But Cunningham found that the ground plan was plainly indicated by the bases of Pillars. These showed an open portico similar to that added to the great temple at Nālandā. The front of the portico consisted of four tall pillars, which, judging from the pilaster attached to the back wall must have been nearly plain. This porch of four pillars is also clearly shown in the small model of the temple which was found amongst the ruins.

An outstanding feature of Bodhgayā is the numerous votive stūpas varying from a few inches in length to several feet. These stūpas are of domed shape, surmounted by umbrellas in the form of a spire.

---

(1) Beal's Si-yu-ki II. 218.

Most of them have images of the Earthly Buddha and the three Bodhisattvas such as Avalokiśvara, Mañjuśrī and Maitreya.

Numerous terracotta plaques are also found at Bodhgayā. These bear images of Buddhist gods and goddesses and were obviously placed there as votive offerings. Such terracottas are found at other Buddhist sites, such as Nālandā, Vaiśālī etc.

The famous Vajrasana is cut in sandstone and bears the typical Mauryan polish of the Aśokan pillars and capitals. This distinctive polish is also found on various sculptures, for instance, the Dīdārganj Yakṣī is later than the Mauryan period.

NĀLANDĀ

The ruins at the village of Bargāon near Rājgiri were explored by General Cunningham in the years 1862-65 and were identified with the ancient University of Nālandā. In his 'Archaeological Report, 1861-62'[1] Cunningham observes:

"Due north from Rājgir, and seven miles distant, lies the village of Bargāon, which is quite surrounded by ancient tanks and ruined mounds, and which

---

(1) Vol. I. Simla 1871. p. 28

possesses finer and more numerous specimens of sculpture than any other place that I have visited. The ruins at Bargaon are so immense, that Dr. Buchanan was convinced it must have been the usual residence of the King's and he was informed by a Jain priest at Bihar that it was the residence of Rājā Śreṇika and his ancestors. By the Brāhmans these ruins are said to be the ruins of 'Kuṇḍilpur', a city famed as the birth-place of Rukminī, one of the wives of Krishna. But as Rukminī was the daughter of Rājā Bhīshma, of Vidarbha, or Berar, it seems probable that the Brāhmans have mistaken Berar for Bihar, which is only seven miles distant from Bargaon. I therefore doubt the truth of this Brāhmanical tradition, more especially as I can show beyond all doubt that the remains at Bargaon are the ruins of Nālandā, the most famous seat of Buddhist learning in all India."

Cunningham bases his identification of Nālandā on the account of the great Chinese traveller Yüan Chwang (or Hinen Tsiang) who visited India in 629-644 A.D. Yüan Chwang relates that:(1)

"Going north from this (i.e. the city of Rajgir) 30 li or so, we come to Nālandā 'saṅghārāma'. The old accounts of the country say that to the south of this 'saṅghārāma', in the middle of an Āmra(2)

---

(1) Samuel Beal: 'Buddhist Records of the Western World' (translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang, A.D. 629) Vol. II, London 1884, pp. 167-8.

(2) mango-fruit

('an-mo-lo) grove, there is a tank. The Nāga of this tank is called Nālanda. By the side of it is built the 'saṅghārāma', which therefore takes the name (of the Nāga). But the truth is that Tathāgata in old days practised the life of a Bodhisattva here, and became the king of a great country, and established his capital in this land, Moved by pity for living things, he delighted in continually relieving them. In remembrance of this virtue he was called 'charity without intermission'; and the 'saṅghārāma' was called in perpetuation of this name. The site was originally an Āmra garden. Five hundred merchants bought it for ten 'koṭis' of gold peices and gave it to Buddha. Buddha preached the law here during three months, and the merchants and others obtained the fruit of holiness. Not long after the Nirvāṇa of Buddha, a former king of this country named Śakrāditya (Shi-kia-lo-'o-t'ir-to) respected and esteemed the (system of the) one Vehicle, and honoured very highly the three treasures. Having selected by augury a lucky spot, he built this saṅghārāma. When he began the work he wounded, in digging, the body of the Nāga. At this time there was a distinguished soothsayer belonging to the heretical sect of the Nirgranthas. He having seen this occurrence, left this record: 'This is a very superior site. If you build here a 'saṅghārāma', it must of necessity become highly renowned. Throughout the five Indies it will be a model. For a period of a thousand years it will flourish still. Students of all digress will

here easily accomplish their studies. But many will spit blood because of this wound given to the Nāga.'"

The remains at Bargāon consist of numerous mounds of burnt brick-ruins. The most conspicuous of them is a row of lofty conical mounds running north and south. Cunningham says: "These high mounds are the remains of gigantic temples attached to the famous monastery of Nālandā. The great monastery itself can be readily traced by the square patches of cultivation amongst a long mass of brick ruins 1600 feet by 400 feet."(1) These open spaces show the positions of the court-yards of the six smaller monasteries which are described by Yuan Chwang as being situated within one enclosure forming altogether eight courts. Five of the six monasteries were built by five consecutive princes of the same family, and the sixth by their successor, whom he calls 'king of Central India'. No dates are given; but from the total silence of Fahian regarding any of the magnificent buildings at Nālandā which are so minuately described by Yuan Chwang, it may be concluded that they were built after A.D. 410. Fahian merely states that he came to the hamelt of Nalo, 'where Sāriputra was born; and this is all that he says of Nālandā. But surely had the lofty temple of King Bāliditya, which was 300 feet high, then existed, it would not have escaped the notice of

---

(1) Cunningham: ASR. 1861-2. Vol. I. pp. 29-30

the Chinese pilgrim. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that the temples and monasteries at Nālandā were built between the visits of Fahian (400 A.D.) and Yuan Chwang (629 A.D.). This date is further borne out by the fact recorded by Yuan Chwang that the great temple of Bālāditya was similar to that near the sacred pīpal tree at Bodhgayā. Now, as similarity of style may generally be taken as denoting proximity of date, the erection of Bālāditya's temple at Nālandā may, with great probability, be assigned to the same century as the Bodhgayā temple.(1)

It was long after General Cunningham had explored the ruins at Bargāon and identified them with the site of Nālandā in 1861-62, that the Archaeological Survey of India under its Director-General Sir John Marshall undertook in 1915 to excavate the site. The excavation was carried on by Dr. D.B. Spooner in 1915 and by others in the following years. The material discovered included inscriptions on copper-plates, door-frames, images and seals and amply justifies the conclusions reached by General Cunningham about the date of the monastery.

Monastery no. I is by far the most important section of the whole monastic establishment at Nālandā. Mr. J.A. Page observes:(2)

---

(1) Ibid.

(2) ASI. AR. 1926-27. p. 132.

"The excavations of this monastery[1], which was the first one to be exposed, when the late Dr. Spooner commenced operations at Nālandā in 1915, was practically completed some two years ago when the earliest pavement of the internal court was exposed. In the year under report, the top of the small 'chabutrā'-like feature that projected, at the earliest level, from the south side of the court was further explored and was found to contain vestiges of walls forming a small square shrine with an image pedestal in the east side. The little shrine was entered from the north through a porch. The concrete floor of this porch, on being opened up, was found to contain beneath it two earlier floors, also of concrete, one laid directly on the other and all within a depth of 1 foot 4 inches.

"Over the earliest floor here and laid flat, possibly to serve as column bases, were two long stone plinths, which had patently been cut to stand erect originally, and seem to have been brought from some other structure. A point of interest that the clearance here disclosed was that the sculptured stone panels portraying human-headed birds revering a lotus (mentioned in the Report for the year 1921-22) were not integral with the original 'chatutrā', but had been inserted here when the second floor of the porch above came to be laid.

---

(1) Monastery No. I of the Survey Report

"On stylistic grounds the panels are assignable to the 7th or possibly the 6th century A.D., but the fact that they were not expressly designed for their present position deprives them of their value as evidence for a date of the structure containing them. The one definite chronological datum that we have obtained is the inscribed copper-plate of Devapāladeva, whose reign is assignable to the latter half of the 9th century A.D., and this record was found in the ruins of the 3rd monastery to be erected on the site. Which of the earlier structures below the Devapāla stratum was seen by Yuan Chwang on his pilgrimage here in the early 7th century, it is not yet possible to say; but we may hope that evidence on this point will be forthcoming as the excavation of the Nālandā area proceeds."

Nālandā today is but a faint shadow of its past glory. It lays amidst long stretches of fields, interspersed here and there with mango-trees and huge mounds still unexcavated. Certain of these are isolated and stand alone; others occur in groups, forming subsidiary sites around the main site of ancient Nālandā.(1)

It was such mounds as these which first drew the attention of General Cunningham. Excavation has

---

(1) Sankalia, H.D.: The University of Nālandā. pp. 216 ff.

"On stylistic grounds the panels are assignable to the 7th or possibly the 6th century A.D., but the fact that they were not expressly designed for their present position deprives them of their value as evidence for a date of the structure containing them. The one definite chronological datum that we have obtained is the inscribed copper-plate of Devapāladeva, whose reign is assignable to the latter half of the 9th century A.D., and this record was found in the ruins of the 3rd monastery to be erected on the site. Which of the earlier structures below the Devapāla stratum was seen by Yuan Chwang on his pilgrimage here in the early 7th century, it is not yet possible to say; but we may hope that evidence on this point will be forthcoming as the excavation of the Nālandā area proceeds."

Nālandā today is but a faint shadow of its past glory. It lays amidst long stretches of fields, interspersed here and there with mango-trees and huge mounds still unexcavated. Certain of these are isolated and stand alone; others occur in groups, forming subsidiary sites around the main site of ancient Nālandā.(1)

It was such mounds as these which first drew the attention of General Cunningham. Excavation has

---

(1) Sankalia, H.D.: The University of Nālandā. pp. 216 ff.

proved them to be the sites of ancient monasteries. Cunningham carried out limited excavations and from the finds that he discovered, he identified the site with the ancient seat of learning Nālandā. But not content with a mere general identification, each mound, each temple, or relic was assigned its original name with the help of Yuan Chwang's account of the place.(1) The history of the researches on Nālandā thus dates back to about 1861.

But the regular work of excavating the site was not undertaken until 1915, when the entire site was, first properly surveyed. As described by the Archaeological Survey Report, it extends some 1600 feet north and south by 800 feet east and west and comprises a long range of monasteries on the east side, and a corresponding range of 'stūpas' on the west, with a couple of monasteries bounding the area on the south. Between the ranges of 'stūpas' and monasteries on the west and east runs the great central approach avenue from the north.(2) The Nālandā of medieval times, however, unquestionably extended far beyond the limits of the site so far acquired by the Archaeological Survey for excavations.

Next to Monastery no. I is the monastery designated as IA. A peculiar feature of this monastery

---

(1) ASR. 1861. 1. p. 28

(2) ASI. AR. 1925-26. p. 100.

is that in the centre are two parallel rows of hearths, seven in number, connected by a common duet of corbelled construction and about two feet in height. A similar feature is found in the eastern verandah of the same building. According to Hīrānanad Sāstri who excavated this part of the site, the hearths were used for preparing 'rasas' or drugs, in which case, the building might have been a medical seminary or 'bhisakṣālā'.(1) These hearths, however, may well have been used for cooking purposes, for in the two chambers to the east, were found heaps of decayed rice and oats.(2) Hence it is possible that the chambers were used as store-rooms, and these naturally would be very close to the kitchen.

In the cells to the north, several copper and and stone image of Tārā, Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya, and Buddha were discovered, perhaps an indication of the saints favoured by individual monks residing there. A flight of steps rises between two of these rooms, probably to afford access to the flat roof. An important item of evidence for the chronology of this monastery is furnished by the intersection of its walls with those of the structure to the north-east; while the existence of the drain passing through its south-west corner and entering the sacrosanct 'stūpa' court of site no. 3 on the Archaeological Survey map probably

---

(1) J.B.O.R.S. IX. Part I. p. 14

(2) It is however doubtful whether oats were grown in India in those days.

indicates that monastery IA had fallen into ruins and was deserted before the 'stūpa' came into existence.(1)

Immediately west of the Bālāditya monastery quadrangle identified by Cunningham (site no. 4 in his account of Nālandā), the four sides of a ruined stone temple were uncovered during the excavation in 1916. The entrance to the temple was up a low flight of steps on the east. The centre of each facade is relieved by a slight projection; but the feature of special interest here is a dado of 211 sculptured panels over the exterior base moulding. These panels are symmetrically disposed around the sides, 20 appearing on each side of the main entrance, and 19 in each of the three divisions of the remaining walls. The pilasters which separate the panels are decorated with the familiar pot-and-foliage design; and are surmounted by arches carved in trefoil shape, certain of them being of pointed form. Some of the panels have weathered away, while others seem to have been left unfinished. This dado of panels is surmounted by a double cornice, the lower moulding being relieved at intervals with replicas of "chaitya arches" alternating with finely-carved geese. The upper moulding, of which the greater part is missing, is decorated with larger replicas of the same 'chaitya' motif; birds of various kinds posed in divers ways appearing in the intervals between them. In a few places there are traces of a third cornice of greater

---

(1) ASI. New Imp. Series. Vol. LI. List of Ancient Monuments in Bihar and Orissa. p. 79.

prominence, in one case portraying a human head within an arch. This third cornice was, however, either never finished or subsequently ruined at some time before the present brick walling here was erected. There is a pleasing variety of sculpture figured on the panels of the dado: human couples in amorous poses; representations of 'makaras'; scroll, foliage and geometrical patterns; again elaborately dressed women seated at ease in pairs; 'kinnaras' playing on musical instruments; a snake charmer etc. The sculptures of deities include Śiva and Pārvatī in separate panels; or together . The goddess is shown turning aside in fear on beholding the terrific form of her spouse; Kārtikeya with his peacock; Gaja Lakṣmī; the gods Agni and Kuvera; the Kachchhapa Jātaka cleverly represented; Buddha with writing materials; and scenes depicting archery. In other panels men and women appear in contorted attitudes; and a monstrous lion is depicted, its long neck towering over a smaller beast which has a curiously porcine look. Many are occupied with merely decorative devices, some of which are of great beauty.(1)

The outer stone plinth and the side projections having been cleared, Dr. Spooner came to the foundation stones on which the superstructure rests, and still lower down to what appeared to be abrick pavement a few

---

(1) Ibid. 80.

feet wide, at the edge of which a trench was dug down some 8 feet further. From the evidence disclosed by this operation it is, therefore, clear that the stone temple above was a later structure erected over an older burnt-brick building; and as the panels of the plinth, according to Dr. Spooner, are assignable to about the sixth or the seventh century A.D., it would appear that these materials were taken from an earlier building and utilized in the decoration of this temple, the level of which in relation to the other strata disclosed in the Nālandā area postulates a considerably later date for it. Dr. Spooner continues, "The exquisite quality of the carvings shows that their date must have been not far distant from Imperial Gupta times."

The external dimensions of the temple are 118 feet by 102 feet, but nothing definite can be said of the inferior plan until further clearance is carried out. The usual position of the sanctum is covered with a heap of huge stones, and except for two side chambers, one on each side of the entrance, nothing can yet be made out. Numerous fragments of the 'āmalaka', capstone-member used to crown medieval 'śikhara', and various other stone members used in the construction of the temple are lying about the debris-covered remains.

Among the more noteworthy sculptures recovered here during the excavations are two, which

are described in the S.Rs. as follows:

(1) Buddha under a trefoil canopy seated in the 'dharmacakra-mudrā' in the deer-park at Benares. Late medieval. height 1' 8".

(2) Standing image of Viṣṇu holding in his four hands the 'śaṅkha' 'Cakra' 'gadā' and 'padma'. height 7".

MAIN STŪPA
(site no.3)

The large stūpa at the south end of the range of mounds running north and south, parallel to the line of monasteries is Cunningham's Vihāra A, described as 53 feet high and about 70 feet thick at the top. Cunningham was inclined to identify it with the 'stūpa' mentioned by Yuan Chwang as marking the place where Lord Buddha dwelt for three months explaining the Law to the gods.

In the course of excavating this 'stūpa' , evidence of no less than 7 superimposed integuments, each built over and around the ruins of a previous one, have come to light. The first three of these overlying stūpas, which were found buried deep in the interrior of the mound, are quite small (all under 12 feet square) and have the appearance of votive 'stūpas' but the last four are extensive structures and were ascended by wide approach stairs projecting from the north face. Much the same state of affairs may be observed at the great 'stūpa' at Sānchī.

Owing to the shattered conditions of the later remains above them it has been necessary to cover up the three earliest stūpas again, but portions of the last four have been left exposed to view. All the stūpas are approximately square in plan; and a curious feature of the four large ones is that the corners of the square basis of the stūpas have survived much better than the facades connecting them.

The fifth of these integuments to be built is noteworthy for the elaborate stucco decoration that covers its corner towers and surviving facades, rows of well-modelled figures of Buddha and Bodhisattvas appearing on them.(1) Each successive addition followed the original plan, and to give suitable support to the additional masonry to be erected, a square frame work of encasing walls was built on each side, the casing then being filled in to form a solid core for the enlarged stūpa.

The main stūpa is surrounded by a large number of smaller stūpas, built one over the other on the same spot, sometimes two and three times. As the main stūpa increased in size, the level of the original court too generally rose, and many smaller stūpas are found, in several places half or completely buried in the various floors which have been unearthed.

---

(1) Ibid. p. 81.

The four latest levels of the stūpa court have each been laid bare over a portion of the area exposed. A factor having an important bearing on the chronology of these levels is the existence of a paved drain which originates in the courtyard of monastery no. IA and enters the stūpa court at the south-east corner, thus indicating apparently that all the four levels referred to above are later than monastery no IA, which by then had fallen to ruin and was finally destroyed; for it is improbable that a modestic drain would be carried through the sacred enclosure of the stūpa court, especially when it could without apparent difficulty be diverted clear of it to the south.(1)

The fame of Nālandā throughout the medieval period was far spread. Even with the political decadence of Magadha, Nālandā continued to enjoy a reputation as the centre of Buddhist culture and retained it under the patronage of the Pāla kings right up to the Muhammadan conquest when the monasteries appear to have been finally deserted. Evidence of the wide renown of Magadha as the centre of the Buddhist world is afforded by the Chinese accounts of contacts between China and Magadha in the sixth and succeeding centuries.(2) Epigraphical evidence of this is contained in the unique inscription of Devapāladeva, which records benefactions at Nālandā by King Bālaputra deva of Suvarṇadvīpa (Sumatra), and which ~~will be~~ has been discussed ~~later.~~ in Chap. III.

---

(1) Ibid. p. 82. figures 50,51 and 52.
Cunningham: ASR. Vol. I plate XVI.

(2) ASI. Ancient Monuments of Bihar and Orissa. p.84.

Except for the ruins of Nālandā, we have no other architectural remains in Bihar belonging to the age of the Pālas. Vikramaśilā (or Vikramaśīla) second only to Nālandā in renown as a seat of Buddhist learning and centre of cultural activities still remains to be identified. If in future we succeed in identifying Vikramaśilā, we shall undoubtedly add a wealth of material to the study of Pāla architecture for its reputation was enormous and its buildings must have been on a large scale.

Architecture, no less than sculpture or painting, reflects the life of the people who brought it into being. And though it is often difficult to separate architecture from sculpture, the two being closely united, architecture has its own purposes and traditions. It provides the setting for all the other arts, and therefore supplements and corroborates the conclusions arrived at by means of the study of sculpture, painting, pottery and inscriptions.

The architecture of Nālandā, studied with regard to its material, purpose and plan or style, stands in striking contrast with the contemporary architecture of Bhuvaneśvara, Purī and Konārka in Orissa, Khajurāho in Central India, Ellora in Hyderabad states, Aihole, Bādāmī and Pattadakal in southern Deccan, Kānchī and Māmallapuram (or Mahābalipuram) in South India. A survey of these sites makes it

immediately clear that architecture in India developed regionally each region having its own tradition of building.

The buildings of Nālandā are almost wholly brick-built, though in their original construction much timber was used for the roofs and their supporting columns.[1] Elsewhere in India, the case is just the other way about; timber is nowhere used. Why did Nālandā almost exclusively use brick as the material for its building construction whereas contemporary architects elsewhere in India chose to build in stone ? The availability of good building stone is one reason. But that does not fully explain the problem, for Nālandā is situated at the northern end of the hilly region of South Bihar. The nearest hills to the east and south of Nālandā are not more than six miles distant, while the hills of Rājagṛha are also within ten miles. These and the neighbouring hill country afford huge quantities of basalt for the sculptors at Nālandā and other places in Magadha. Could not the architects have employed for building purpose the stone that was so successfully used by sculptors ? Nor can it be said that there was any lack of tradition of stone-building. There is plentiful archaeological evidence for the use of various kinds of stone for building purposes in northern India from the 3rd

---

(1) Page, J.A.: ASI. AR. 1922-23. p. 28
plates XVIII (plan of excavation)
and XIX and XX (brick-built
structures)

century B.C. to the 5th century A.D. The remains of the Mauryyan palace with its grey sand-stone highly polished columns excavated at Pāṭaliputra and the Gupta temple of Muṇḍeśvarī in the district of Shahabad in Bihar furnish concrete examples. Burnt brick as a building material seems to have become popular in the 5th century A.D. Brick instruments range from the great temple at Bodh Gaya to the stūpa at Brāhmanabad in Sind. Since brick can be carved as well as moulded, its use permits the use of a highly decorative style. It is, therefore, intelligible that it came to compete with stone as a building materials

It is true that though close to the hills, Nālandā itself is situated on the plains. The first buildings were constructed long before the advent of the Pālas, when the Guptas were at the height of their power in the middle of the fifth century A.D. It is not known exactly who founded the University of Nālandā and in what year. It is said that the University was founded in 455 A.D. during the reign of Kumāragupta I (c. 415-455 A.D.). Coomaraswamy, however, maintains that it was founded by Narasinha Bālāditya (467-473 A.D.). Hsiian Tsang describes the great brick temple over three hundred feet in height, erected by this king, as resembling the tower at Bodhgayā, and says that it was exquisitely decorated and magnificently furnished. Nothing survives but the massive foundation; some of the niches of this basement which represent fully developed curvilinear Nāgara Śikharas may be later

additions, for this form of tower was only developed in the 6th and 7th centuries. In any case, nothing at Nālandā, the most famous of medieval Indian monasteries and centres of learning, antedates the fifth century, or post-dates the twelfth."(1) Even so the earliest remains at Nālandā are at least four centuries earlier than the oldest temples at Bhuvaneśvara, three centuries earlier than the Kailāsa temple of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa King Kṛṣṇa I at Ellora and about five centuries earlier than the temples at Khajurāho. When discussing the influence of one style on another, these dates are worth remembering. It is true that the majority of monasteries that have been found there, can be said, on the basis of inscriptions, to have been erected in the ninth century A.D., when the Pālas were at their greatest. At the same time, the remains make it plain that the pattern of life and art at Nālandā was set long before, at the time when the university was first founded under the Guptas.

It is evident that the Buddhists at Nālandā had a purely practical point of view in erecting their monasteries. Their religious outlook throughout and their political circumstances in the fifth century A.D. when Nālandā started its career as a university were against any manifestation of worldly show, such as was the primary consideration of the kings who built the Brāhmanical temples at Bhuvaneśvara, Konārka, Purī, Khajurāho, Ellora, Aihole and Māmallapuram. The purely

---

(1) Coomaraswamy, A.K.: 'History of Indian and Indonesian Art'. London. 1927. p. 82.

utilitarian purpose of the buildings at Nālandā is at once evident in the long rows of low cells, square or rectangular, surrounded by massive walls without any embellishment save arched or rectangular niches with their images of Buddha. It is true the outer walls of the plinth of the great tower bear scenes from the Buddha's life in exquisite stucco sculpture. But even there the purpose is purely religious. As at Bhārhut at the beginning of the history of Buddhist art, sculpture is used to illustrate the sacred texts. The countless erotic scenes sculptured on the temples of Bhuvaneśvara, Konārka, Purī and Khajurāho have no place here. The utilitarian and purely practical purposes of the Buddhist monks at Nālandā decided not only the choice of material to be employed in building, but also the plan or style of the whole structure. Brick being less expensive and easier to manage was used for constructing the walls, while stone was used only as the material for sculpture, doorframes and columns. The stone had to be transported from the hills. Bricks could be made from the mud of the river-bed or fields near-by.

The plan of the remains at Nālandā clearly shows that the University was a growing city. The sanitary arrangements and main thoroughfares are clearly discernible, but the lack of comprehensive planning is everywhere. The city was built event by event.

According to Yuan Chwang there were 10,000 students and 1,000 teachers at Nālandā when he visited the University in 641 A.D. Space was, therefore, a primary consideration with the architects responsible for the buildings. Accommodation had to be provided for as many people as possible at least cost. The Brāhmanic temples elsewhere in India on the other hand were intended to house images of gods and goddesses, and they were built under royal patronage. Considerations of space and expense did not arise. The builders could, therefore, plan in terms of scale and grandeur.

Nālandā was destroyed in 1199 A.D. by Mussalman invaders under Bhakhtiar. Since then it has not been inhabited. Architecture, therefore, after the end of the twelfth century A.D. must be studied elsewhere. The temple of Somanātha (Śiva) on the sea-shore in Saurāṣṭra had already been looted and burnt by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1030 A.D., more than a century and a half before the sack of Nālandā by Bakhtiar and his horsemen. These and many other attacks on Indian temples, both Buddhist and Brāhmanic, have led people to think of ways of protecting them. Most of the great temples in Northern India, including the temples at Khajurāho, Bhuvaneśvara and Konārka seem to have been abandoned without any determined defence. In the south, the temples were surrounded by high walls, pierced by strong gateways. Indeed they were sacred cities complete units in themselves. The Jagannātha Temple at Purī is also defended by walls. These may have played an important part in

its preservation, for unlike Khajurāho,[1] Bhuvaneśvara[2] and Konārka[3], which have been utterly deserted by the people, it is still one of the modern India's greatest and most popular temples. Later on, when peaceful conditions were restored, some of these temples, it is true, the Liṅgarāja at Bhuvaneśvara, for instance, beame centres of worship again, but many of them at Bhuvaneśvara and elsewhere only survive in the Archaeological Survey of India's records.

The temple of Jagannātha at Purī was built by Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga of the Eastern Gangas towards the close of the eleventh century A.D.[4] When the whole of Āryāvarta (North India) was brought under Muslim rule in the middle of the thirteenth century A.D., the conquerors began to penetrate the South. While the Afghans of Delhi reached the Deccan through the Narmadā and Tāptī valleys, their kinsmen in Bengal proceeded south and south-west towards Orissa. The approaching danger forced the Brāhmanic priests of Bhuvaneśvara, Konārka and the other temples big and small throughout Orissa, to retire to Purī. They concentrated there and planned to resist the invading idol-breakers on the shore of the sea. The

---

(1) Cunningham, A: 'Archaeological Survey Report' Vol. II. Simla 1871. Plan of Saiva temples. Plate XCVII. face p. 419.
Coomaraswamy, A.K.: 'History of Indian and Indonesian Art. London. 1927. plate LXIV.

(2) Ibid. plate LXV. plate LXVI, fig. 216.

(3) Ibid. plate LXVI. fig. 217.

(4) Banerji, R.D.: 'History of Orissa' Vol. I. Calcutta. 1930. p. 251.

subsequent history of the temple shows how after both major attacks walls were added to make the defence stronger. The original temple was not only without enclosure-walls, but also without Jagamohana, Nāṭamandira or Bhogamaṇḍapa, all of which were added through the centuries up to the eighteenth century A.D.[1] As one enters the gateway of the outer enclosure-wall (the gateway in itself is a huge temple) one comes to the innger wall, the gateway of which leads to the Bhogamaṇḍapa, Nāṭamandira, Jagamohana and finally to the Garbhagṛha or Vimāna (shrine). The whole construction in principle differs little from that of a fort. The double enclosure-walls are even provided with bastions. Only the temple was presided over by a god while the forts are ruled by kings. There are many parallels between Purī and the great temples of southern India, but, the defensive purpose of the Purī bastions and gateways is clear.

The original temple of Jagannātha at Purī consisted only of the Vimāna (main shrine) as was, therefore, in principle quite like the temples at Bhuvaneśvara or any Rekhā[2] temple in North-Eastern India. It is in the later additions to the temple, however, the Jagamohana, Nāṭamandira, Bhogamaṇḍapa and the enclosure-walls with their gateways that the

---

(1) Ibid. Vol. II. Calcutta 1931. p. 379.

(2) Ibid. Vol. II. Calcutta 1931. plate facing page 120.

influence of Southern India is manifested. In the southern temples the dimensions of the main shrine and the accompanying edifices are reversed. At Purī, the main shrine is the highest. In the South Indian temples the 'gopuram' (gate-way) of the outermost enclosure-wall have the greatest height and grandeur.

The subject-matter and execution of the decorative sculptures on the walls of the buildings of Nālandā are very different from those on the Brāhmanic temples at Bhuvaneśvara, Konārka and Purī in Orissa and Khajurāho in Central India. Rakhaldas Banerji is puzzled at the presence of indecent figures on contemporary religious edifices.(1) He quotes Manmohan Ganguli at length, who observes: "One of the most perplexing features of Orissan architecture and sculpture is the presence of indecent figures defiling the sacred walls of the Jagamohana, Nāṭamandira etc. except those of the sanctum. The sight of such figures representing various scenes of voluptuousness is puzzling and nauseating. One is at a loss to understand why they have a place at all within the sacred enclosure. Not being able to account for this anomaly, one is surely to be led into the pitfall of an erroneous conclusion that the artist who designed these ornaments to decorate the outer walls of a temple must have belonged to a morally depraved and

---

(1) Banerji, R.D.: 'History of Orissa'
Vol. II. p. 401.

vicious race. I enquired of the local pandits for a reasonable explanation, who could offer none; I came to learn afterwards that such indecent figures are prevalent not only in Orissa, but in other parts of India as well. As an illustration, I may cite the case of the temple of the Kandarya Mahadeva at Khajuraho in Bundelkhand."(1) With regard to the sculptures of this Saiva temple at Khajurāho, Cunningham observes: "All of these are highly indecent, and most of them are disgustingly obscene, but the remainder of the sculptures are the ordinary representations of the Hindu gods and goddesses, in different positions and under various forms."(2) Rakhaldas Banerji quotes Rothenstein(3) on Havell and Coomaraswamy, who hold that "to the Indian mind this expression of the idealism of body and soul or of the longing of the soul for God seemed perfectly natural and that in carving or contemplating erotic motifs, no merely physical sensual image was intended or received. My knowledge of Indian thought is insufficient to allow me to judge of the correctness of this view. An element of wantonness does undoubtedly assert itself in art more boldly at some period of social culture than at others, and we must envisage certain

---

(1) Ibid. pp. 400-401

(2) Cunningham, A.: "Arch. Sur. Rep." Vol. II. p.420

(3) Codrington, K. de B.: "Ancient India". London. 1926. p.6 (introduction by William Rothenstein)

aspects of medieval carving as a part of the 'tantric' attitude which was characteristic of Indian religious philosophy between the tenth and twelfth centuries."(1)

It is important to remember that all of these temples at Bhuvaneśvara, Konārka, Purī and Khajurāho together with their sculptural ornamentation were built before 1199 A.D. the year in which Nālandā was brought to its ruin. The absence of eroticism in the case of the Nālandā sculptures and its presence in the contemporary sculpture of Orissa and Khajuraho was due in the main to the difference of religious outlook between the Buddhists and Brāhmanists, who were the sponsors and supporters of these centres. The Brāhmanic temples were professedly religious, but their raison d'etre was in fact secular in as much as they were built in order to satisfy the purely secular desire, the love of glory, of the sponsoring ruler. The Buddhist monasteries at Nālandā, on the other hand, were secular in form but religious in spirit. Nālandā was a centre of learning, the teachers and students were dedicated to a specific purpose. The whole basis of the Buddhist outlook was the recognition of an all-enveloping misery and the way out of it through a ceaseless practice of love and charity. Endowments were certainly made to Nālandā for the maintenance of the University by kings in

---

(1) Banerji, R.D.: 'History of Orissa' Vol. II. p. 410.

India and beyond[1], but the whole management of the establishment was in the hands of the monks; and no control on it, even indirect, was exercised by the benefactors.

To say that 'Tantra' with its growing emphasis on sensual practices was responsible for the degeneration of ideal in art is to put the cart before the horse. Later medieval Tantra had its growth in the courts which transferred it to their temples too. No temple that was not directly under the influence of a prince is as yet known to bear on its walls the stories of human beastliness in sculpture.

It is also said that Buddhism was eliminated from the land of its birth and fifteen hundred years of magnificent growth because of its total degeneration under Tantrism. This is either a mistake or worse, a misrepresentation. Mistake, because many scholars confuse the later Tantric practices among Buddhists in Nepāla and Tibet with the activities of the monks at Nālandā and elsewhere in India before their elimination with the destruction of Nālandā in 1199 A.D. by Bakhtear Khilji. If Tantra and its eroticism were to cause elimination of any religious group in the land, it should have been the followers of Brāhmanism whose great temples in Orissa, still venerated by

---

(1) supra. Chap. III (Bālaputradeva of Suvarṇadvīpa)

millions in India, and those at Khajurāho, not to speak of the hundreds of less known of them throughout the country, bear in sculpture the testimony of their Tantric unrestraint in contrast with the calm and pathos that rule in the sculpture of contemporary Nālandā of the Buddhists rather than these latter.

MITHILĀ and MAGADHA

700 A.D. - 1100 A.D.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Archaeology in Bihar

It is to the great credit of the members of the East India Company's Administration in India that even before they settled down there as a stable and eventually supreme political power, they had started inquiries into the history of that vast country whose destiny they held in their hands until recently. The Battle of Plassey was fought in the year 1757 and the English under the command of Captain Robert Clive, later Lord Clive of Plassey, were victorious. The rule of the Nabobs ended except in name and power passed into the hands of the East India Company.

It was only about twenty years after the foundation of British power in India in 1757, in 1780, that two inscriptions of Pāla kings were discovered within two hundred miles of Plassey. In that year the copper-plate inscription of King Devapāladeva was found at Munger. Charles Wilkins deciphered it and published a translation in the form of a pamphlet in 1781. Wilkins, also, discovered the stone-pillar bearing the inscription of King Nārāyaṇapāla at Badal in the district of Dinajpur. These inscriptions have been discussed at length in Chapter III of this work.

It will not be considered out of place here, we hope, to trace very briefly the circumstances that led to the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784, the organisation that has done so much for the reconstruction of the history of India and has been the parent body for many similar bodies founded later on in India as well as abroad.

The need for an organised study of Indian society, its origins and development, arose out of the practical difficulties in the administration of justice experienced by the new rulers. In the seventies of the eighteenth century Sir William Jones went to Calcutta as a judge of the supreme court there. The Indian sentiment had already been wounded by the execution of Nandakumār on a charge of forgery. The wholesale application of English law to cases, criminal or civil, in India was deemed undesirable. The Company's advisors looked to the old laws of the land, got hold of Manu's 'Smṛti', translated it into English and made it the basis of their administration of justice. But the mere law-digest of Manu was not enough. They proceeded to collect evidence of its application in the past, and thus was started the search for old inscriptions, paper-documents, coins etc. Round about 1780 a substantial amount of material for the study of India's past had been gathered together and the pioneers in this field led by Sir William Jones founded in 1784 the Asiatic Society of

Bengal at Calcutta in order to carry out further researches on an organised and co-ordinated basis. The Society had the patronage of the Governor-General, Warren Hastings, and it soon gained the attention of the learned world everywhere. In 1788 was published the first volume of 'Asiatic Researches' which contained the Munger copper-plate inscription of Devapāla by Charles Wilkins and a discussion of the chronology of the Pāla kings by Sir William Jones, along with other essays by several hands.

After Sir William Jones and Charles Wilkins, the most important name in connection with the Asiatic Society of Bengal is that of H.T. Colebrooke, whose contributions to the volumes of 'Asiatic Researches' started in the nineties and continued right up to the end of that series in the third decade of the nineteenth century. Colebrooke's chief interest was in language and literature, in which fields he displayed great initial ability.

In the twenties of the nineteenth century B.H. Hodgson went to Nepal as the minister resident of the East India Company. He observed Buddhism as it was practised among the people in the vale of Nepal and discovered a large number of old manuscripts in the Darbar library at Kathmandu. Some of these manuscripts were prepared at the University of Nālandā and are dated a few decades before the destruction of that centre of Buddhist learning in 1199 A.D.

If Wilkins' discovery of the inscriptions at Munger and Badal pointed out the existence of a long-lived dynasty of Buddhist rulers in North-Eastern India, Hodgson's discoveries provided invaluable materials for an interpretation of their times.

By far the most important event of the century in archaeology, not only of Bihar (Mithilā and Magadha) but of India as a whole, was the deciphering of Aśoka's inscriptions by James Princep in 1837. A little before that the Allahabad Aśoka pillar inscription of Samudragupta had been deciphered. Though that inscription lies outside Bihar, it lifts the veil from a long and eventful period of the history of India. The Brāhmī script of Aśoka's inscriptions had become obsolete even before Ywan Chwang the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim visited India (629 A.D. - 643 A.D.). It had been, therefore, a puzzle, not only to Ywan Chwang but to generations of Indian scholars, for more than twelve hundred years before Princep read it and lifted the curtain from the life and times of Aśoka.

At the same time foreign accounts of India, including such classical sources as Megasthenes, Ptolemy and Strabo and the Roman Pliny, were applied to the problems of Indian History. If the Greek and Roman sources are helpful for the study of India under the Mauryyas and their successors before the advent of the Guptas, the Chinese sources are equally

valuable for the following period. Fahian visited India under the Guptas especially Magadha, the land of the Buddhists, in 399 A.D. - 413 A.D. He was followed by Ywan Chwang in 629 A.D. - 643 A.D. and again by Itsing in 772 A.D. Fahian's account of India was published in French at Paris in 1836.(1) From 1851 to 1858 appeared Stanislas Julien's series on Ywan Chwang, including a French translation of Ywan Chwang's biography(2) by his disciple, Hoei-Li and the great traveller's own Su-zu-ki (The Records of the Western World) in two volumes(3) from the original Chinese.

Alexander Cunningham (later Sir Alexander) of the Royal Engineers, who spent a life-time in India, started in the fifties his explorations of the hundreds of sites of archaeological interest throughout northern India. With Julien's Ywan Chwang in his hands, he could identify most of the places visited and mentioned by the Chinese pilfrim. In Bihar, Vaiśālī, Pāṭaliputra, Nālandā, Rājagṛha and Buddhagayā along with other less important places were thus identified. In 1863, Cunningham was appointed the Director-General of Archaeology in India and published his annual reports in twenty-two volumes between 1871 and 1887. They are a mine of carefully gathered information about ancient

---

(1) A. Remusat, Klaproth Landresse: 'Foe-Koue-Ki' Pairs. 1836.

(2) 'Histoire de la Vie de Hiouen-Thsang'. Paris. 1853.

(3) 'Memoires sur les Contrees Occidentales' 2 vols. Paris. 1857-58.

Indian sites and the people who inhabited them. They will always be of the greatest use to students of Indian Archaeology.

Cunningham was not satisfied with merely exploring the old sites and recording them skilfully in his reports. He was the first to use the spade in India to unearth material of historical value. At Vaiśālī in 1882 he made a few trenches in the Rājā Visāla kā Garha and obtained interesting clay-seals and terra-cottas of the Gupta period. It was twenty years later that Theodor Bloch in 1902 made another small-scale excavation on the same site. He was followed by D.B. Spooner in 1906-7.

The Archaeological Survey of India, reconstituted by Lord Curzon in 1902, have carried on excavations at Pāṭaliputra (in 1913-4, 1926-7) and Nālandā (in 1922-23 and 1926-27) in Bihar. These have revealed a part of the Mauryyan palace and the wooden wall at Pāṭaliputra, and a number of Buddhist Vihāras at Nālandā, together with numerous images inscribed and otherwise, stone and copper-plate inscriptions, votive stūpas etc. belonging to the age of the Pālas. It is unfortunate that since the departure of Sir John Marshall in 1929, the late distinguished Director-General of the Archaeological Survey, no excavations have taken place in Bihar. The work was, however, resumed in 1945 by the then Director-General, Dr. R.E.M. Wheeler. The Annual

Reports of the Archaeological Survey, together with their numerous monographs, nicely printed and sumptuously illustrated, are a credit to Sir John Marshall and his colleagues.

The Future

Much has been done already, but far more remains to be done in the field of archaeology in Bihar. Dr Wheeler writes: "In the past, Indian archaeology has concentrated its major efforts upon the north-western region, upon what is now Pakistan. The discovery of the Indus civilization was itself a sufficient incentive to the Archaeological Survey to undertake large-scale excavations at the two principal Indus sites, Harappa and Mohenjodaro, and to supplement this work by widespread exploration in the plains and hills of the old Indian borderland. ..... Other work was done intermittently in eastern and southern India, but always on a very much smaller scale. The North-West was paramount .. We know very much more archaeologically about the Indus, which has given the new India perhaps little more than a name, than the Ganges which may almost be said to have given India a faith. Let us turn now to the valley of the Ganges and devote to it something of the attention which in the past has been lavished so fruitfully upon the valley of the Indus." (1)

---

(1) Wheeler, R.E.M.: 'Ancient India' (Bulletin of the Archaeological Survey in India) No. 4, 1947-48. p.4.

It is clear that the nature of the work that has been done so far has been more explorative than interpretative. It was bound to be so. A century ago when Cunningham was wandering through hill and plain throughout northern India, including Bihar, the amount of objective material was so scanty that it would be futile to try to form judgments on the past that could stand the test of even a year's research in the field. Even the literary sources were very inadequately known. It was in the latter half of the nineteenth century that the Asiatic Society of Bengal brought out the 'Bibliotheca Indica' series, which included some of the most important philosophical works and law-digests of the philosophers and jurists of Mithilā. Some of the most important works of the Buddhist philosophers who lived and worked at Nālandā have been published only recently. They many volumes of the 'Catalogue of Manuscripts in Mithilā' published by the Bihar Research Society (Patna) tell us of large numbers of palm-leaf, as well as paper, manuscripts hidden under thatched roofs all over Mithilā, slowly but steadily being consumed by insects if spared by the annual fires that are so common and disastrous after every Spring. Hundreds of old mounds that form the subject of numerous folk-stories of the past have not even been put on the archaeological map as yet. Only the western fringe of Mithilā has so far attracted the notice of archaeologists - Vaiśālī, Lauria Arevaj

Lauria Nandangarh, Rampurabā, each of them having an Aśoka pillar. In furthering this work, there is no doubt that much help would be derived from a collection of the many extant legends and stories, as well as folk songs.

It is not sufficient that manuscripts should be brought together in a central library for proper keeping and their contents published, that old sites be excavated and the objects excavated preserved. It is desirable that while work is carried on in each branch of scholarship, an effort be also simultaneously made to co-ordinate the results of the different branches. In the preceding pages that co-ordination of results has been attempted in a humble but sincere way.

MITHILĀ and MAGADHA

700 A.D. - 1100 A.D.

APPENDIX I

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ĀNANDAGIRI - Śaṅkaravijayah
Calcutta. 1868.

AUROBINDO, SRI - The Renaissance in India
Calcutta. 1937.

BACHHOFER, Ludwig - Early Indian Sculpture
2 vols. Paris. 1929.

BAGCHI, P.C. - see MAJUMDAR, R.C.

BANERJEA, JN - The Development of Hindu Iconography
Calcutta. 1944 (?)

see also MAJUMDAR, R.C.

BANERJI, R.D. - The Pālas of Bengal
Calcutta. 1915.

History of Orissa.
2 vols. Calcutta. 1930-31.

Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture.
Delhi. 1933.

BANERJI-SASTRI, A. - Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
Vol. XXVI. 1940.

BARNETT, L.D. - Epigraphia Indica
Vol. XVIII. 1925-26.

BEAL, S. - see FAHIAN, YUAN CHWANG

BHATTACHARYYA, Benoytosh - The Buddhist Iconography
London. 1924.

Sādhanamālā
Baroda. Vol. I. 1925.
Vol. II. 1928.

BHATTASALI, N.K. - Sculptures in Dacca Museum
Dacca. 1929.

BHAVABHŪTI - Uttararāmacaritam

BINYON, Lawrence - The Spirit of Man in
Asian art.
Cambridge, Mass. 1935.

see also HERRINGHAM, Lady

BIRDWOOD, G.C.M. - The Industrial Arts of India
London. 1880.

BROWN, Percy - Indian Painting
Calcutta. 1927.

Indian Architecture
(Buddhist and Hindu)
Bombay. 1942.

BUCHANAN, Francis - An account of the Districts
of Bihar and Patna in
1811-12
Vols. I-II. Patna (?)

An Account of the District
of Shahabad in 1809-10.
Patna. 1934.

An Account of the District
of Bhagalpur in 1810-11
Patna. 1939.

CHANDA, Ramaprasad - Medieval Indian Sculpture
in British Museum
London. 1936.

CHAKRAVARTI, P.C. - see MAJUMDAR, R.C.

CHATTERJI, Sunitikumar see MAJUMDAR, R.C.

CODRINGTON, K. de B. - Ancient India
(Introduction by W.
Rothenstein)
London. 1926.

CODRINGTON, K. de B. - An Introduction to the Study of Medieval Indian Sculpture. London. 1929.

COLEBROOKE, H.T. - Asiatic Researches, Vol. IX. Calcutta. 1807.

COOMARSWAMY, Anand K. - A History of Indian and Idonesian Art. London. 1927.

Transformation of Nature in Art. Cambridge, Mass. 1934.

Elements of Buddhist Iconography. Cambridge, Mass. 1935.

COWELL, E.B. - see UDAYANA: Kusumāñjali

CUNNINGHAM, A. - Archaeological Survey Reports. Vols. I, II, III, XVI.

Mahābodhi London. 1892.

Ancient Geography of India, second edition edited by S.N. Majumdar Sastri Calcutta. 1924.

DAS, Sarat Chandra - Indian Pandits in the land of snow. Calcutta. 1893.

DASGUPTA, S.N. - A History of Indian Philosophy. Vol. II. Cambridge. 1932.

DATTA, Bhupendranatha see TĀRANĀTHA

De, S.K. - see MAJUMDAR, R.C.

DEY, Nundo Lal - The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India. Calcutta. 1927.

DHARMAKĪRTI - Pramāṇavārttikam edited by Rahula Sankṛtyayana. Patna. 1938-40.

ELIOT, Charles - Hinduism and Buddhism London. 1921.

A Record of the Buddhist Kingdom in 399-414 A.D.

(1) Translated by A. Remusat, Klaproth and Landresse, Paris. 1836.

(2) Translated by S. Beal London. 1869.

(3) Translated by H.A. Giles London and Shanghai 1877. Cambridge 1923.

(4) Translated by J. Legge. Oxford. 1886.

FERGUSSON, James - History of Indian and Eastern Architecture. 2 vols. London. 1910.

FRENCH, J.C. - The Art of the Pala Empire London. 1928.

GAIT, E.A. - Census of India 1911 Vol. I. Part I. Calcutta. 1913.

GAṄGĀVIṢṆU - Stotraratnākarah Bombay. 1879.

GANGOLY, O.C. - Rūpam, Calcutta Nol. 1920. Nos. 22-23, 1925.

Indian Architecture Bombay. 1946.

GHOSH, Manomohan - see NANDIKEŚVARA

GILES, H.A. - see FAHIAN

GRIFFITHS, John - Ajanta Paintings
London. 1896.

GRUNWEDEL, Albert - Buddhist Art in India
London. 1901.

see TARANATHA

GUHA, B.S. - Census of India 1931
Vol. I part III A
Simla. 1935.

HAEBERLIN, John - Kāvyasaṅgraha
Calcutta. 1847.

HAVELL, E.B. - Indian Sculpture and Painting
London. 1928.

HAZRA, R.C. - Puranic Records on Hindu
Rites and Customs
Dacca. 1936.

HERRINGHAM, Lady Wilmost - Ajanta Frescoes
London. 1915.

HODGSON, B.H. - Essays on the Languages,
Literature and Religion
of Nepal and Tibet
London. 1874.

HOERNLE, A.F.R. - Indian Antiquary
Vol. 14. 1885.

HULTZSCH, E. - Indian Antiquary
Vol. 14. 1885.
Vol. 15. 1886.

HUTTON, J.H. - Caste in India
Cambridge. 1946.

ITSING - A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practised in India and the Malaya Archipelago (A.D. 671-695) Translated by J. Takakusu Oxford. 1896.

JAYASAWAL, K.P. - Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art. Calcutta. 1934.

JHA, Ganganatha - Hindu Law in its sources Allahabad. Vol. I. 1930.

see MAṆḌANAMIŚRA, Bhāvanāviveka

see ŚĀNTARAKṢITA, Tattvasaṅgraha

JONES, William - Asiatic Researches Vol. I Calcutta. 1788.

JULIEN, S. - see YUAN CHWANG

KALA, S.C. - Sculptures in Allahabad Museum. Allahabad. 1946.

KAVIRAJ, Gopinath - see KUMĀRILA, Tantravārttika

KEMPERS, A.J.B. - The Bronzes of Nalanda and Hindu Javanese Art Leyden. 1933.

KIELHORN, F. - Indian Antiquary Vol. 17, 1888. Vol. 21, 1892.

Epigraphia Indica Vol. IV. 1896-97

KRAMRISCH, Stella - Viṣṇudharmottara Calcutta. 1928.

Indian Sculpture Calcutta. 1933.

The Hindu Temple. 2 vols. Calcutta. 1946.

KṚṢṆAMIŚRA - Prabodhacandrodayah
Bombay. 1916.

KUMĀRILABHAṬṬA - Tantravārttika. 2 vols.
Calcutta. 1924.
Introduction by
Gopinath Kaviraj

Ṭupṭīkā
Banaras. 1930.

Ślokavārttika
Madras. 1946.

KURAISHI, M.H. - Ancient Monuments of Bihar
and Orissa. Calcutta. 1931.

LEGGE, J. - see FAHIAN

LEVY, Sylvain - Le Nepal, 3 vols.
Paris. 1905-8.

MAJUMDAR, R.C. - History of Bengal. Vol. I
Decca. 1943.

An Advanced History of India
London. 1946.

MAṆḌANAMIŚRA - Vidhiviveka

Bhāvanāviveka, 2 vols.
Banaras. 1922-23.
ed. by Ganganatha Jha

Mīmānsānukramaṇikā
Banaras. 1928.
(with Sanskrit commentary
by Ganganatha Jha)

Sphoṭasiddhi
Madras. 1931.

Vibhramaviveka
Madras. 1932.

Brahmasiddhi
Madras. 1932.

see SUREŚVARĀCARYA

MARTIN, Montgomery - The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India. 3 vols. London. 1838.

MITRA, Rajendralala - Buddhagayā Calcutta. 1878.

Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal Calcutta. 1882.

Aṣṭasāhasrikā Calcutta. 1888.

MOOKERJI, Radhakumud - Ancient Indian Education London. 1947.

MUIR, John - Original Sanskrit Texts. Vol. III.

MUKHARJI, T.N. - Art-Manufactures of India Calcutta. 1888.

NANDIKEŚVARA - Abhinayadarpaṇam Calcutta. 1934.

O'MALLEY, L.S.S. - District Gazetteers: Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, Saran, Champaran, Bhagalpur, Munger, Purnea, Santalparganna, Patna Gaya, Shahabad, Ranchi Palamau, Hazaribag, Singhbhum, Manbhum.

RADHAKRISHNAN, S. - Indian Philosophy Vol. I. London 1923. Vol. II. " 1927.

RAO, T.A.G. - Elements of Hindu Iconography. 4 vols. Madras. 1914-16.

RAY, Nihar ranjan - see MAJUMDAR, R.C.

RAYCHAUDHURI, H.C. - see MAJUMDAR, R.C.

RISLEY, H.H. - The tribes and Castes of Bengal
Ethnographic Glossary
2 vols.
Anthropometric Data
2 vols.
Calcutta. 1891.

The People of India
Calcutta. 1908.
Calcutta, Simla & London
1915.

ROTHENSTEIN, W. - see HERRINGHAM

see CODRINGTON, Ancient India

SAMADDAR, J.N. - The Glories of Magadha
Patna. 1923.

SANDHYĀKARANANDĪ - Rāmacaritam

see SHASTRI, Haraprasad

SANKALIA, H.D. - The University of Nalanda
Madras. 1934.

SAṄKARĀCĀRYA - Minor Works, 2 vols.
Poona. 1924-25.

SANKṚTYAYANA, Rahula - Purātattvanibandhāvalī
Allahabad. 1937.

Darśanadigdarśana
Allahabad. 1944.

see DHARMAKĪRTI

ŚĀNTARAKṢITA - Tattvasaṅgraha
Sanskrit Text. 2 vols.
Baroda. 1926.

English Translation by
Ganganatha Jha in 2 vols.
Vol. I Baroda 1937
vol. II Baroda 1939.

SARKAR, Jadunath - India through the Ages Calcutta. 1928.

SASTRI, Hirananda - Epigraphia Indica Vol. XVII. 1923-24.

Nalanda and its epigraphic material. ASI memoir no. 66 Delhi. 1942.

SCHEIFNER, Anton - see TARANATHA

SHASTRI, Haraprasad - Discovery of Living Buddhism in Bengal. Calcutta. 1897.

Rāmacaritam of Sandhyākaranandī. Calcutta. 1910.

Bauddha Gāna O Dohā Calcutta. 1916.

Magadhan Literature Calcutta. 1923.

Sanskrit Culture Lahore. 1928.

SINGH, Shyamanarayan - History of Tirjut Calcutta. 1922.

SMITH, V.A. - A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon second edition revised by K. de B. Codrington Oxford. 1930.

The Early History of India. Oxford. 1924.

STCHERBATSKY, Th. - Abhisamayālaṅkāraprajñāpāramitā-upadeśaśāstra of Bodhisattva Maitreya Leningrad. 1929.

SURESVARĀCĀRYA - Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya-vārttika, 3 vols. Poona. 1892-94.

Taittirēyopaniṣadbhāṣya-vārttika. Poona. 1911.

Naiṣkarmyasiddhi Bombay. 1925.

TAKAKUSU, J. - see ITSING

TĀRANĀTHA - Anton Schiefner: Taranathae de Doctrinae Buddhicae in India propagatione narratio. Contextum Tibeticum. Petropoli. 1868.

Anton Schiefner: Taranatha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien. St. Petersburg. 1869.

Albert Grunwedel: Taranatha's Edelsteinmne das Buch von den Vesmitten der Sieben Inspirationem Petrograd. 1914.

Bhupendranatha Datta: Mystic Tales of Lama Taranatha (A religio-sociological History of Mahayana Buddhism) Calcutta. 1944.

UDAYANĀCĀRYA - Nyāyavārttikatātparya-parisuddhih Calcutta 1911 - (Bibliotheca Indica)

Kusumāñjalih ed. by E.B. Cowell Calcutta. 1864.

Kiranāvalī Calcutta (Bibliotheca Indica)

UDAYANĀCĀRYA - Ātmatattvaviveka
Banaras. 1925.
Calcutta 1907-39
(Bibliotheca Indica)

VĀCASPATIMIŚRA - Bhāmatī
(Bibliotheca Indica)
Banaras. 1880.

Nyāyavārttikatātparyaṭīkā
Banaras. 1925.

Tattvakaumudī
Poona. 1934.

VIDYABHUSANA, S.C. - Sragdharāstotram
Calcutta. 1908.

A History of Indian Logic
Calcutta. 1921.

VIDYĀRAṆYA - Śaṅkaradigvijayah
Poona. 1916.

VOGEL, J. Ph. - Buddhist Art in India,
Ceylon and Java.
Oxford. 1936.

WADIA, D.N. - Geology of India.
London. 1919.

WATTERS, Thomas - see YUAN CHWANG

WILKINS, Charles - Devapāladeva: A Translation
of a Royal Grant of Land.
Calcutta. 1781.

WOODROFFE, John - Is India Civlized ?
Madras. 1922.

Śakti and Śākta
Madras and London.
1929.

YUAN CHWANG -

S. Julien: Histoire de la Vie d'Hiouen-Thsang et de ses voyages dans l'Inde entre lesannees 629 et 645 de notre ere. Paris. 1851.

S. Julien: Histoire de la Vie de Hiouen-Thsang et de ses voyages dans l'Inde depuis l'an 629 jusquin 645 par Hoei-Li et Yen-Thsang. Paris. 1853.

S. Julien: Memoires sur Les Contrees Occidentales traduits du Sanscrit en Chinois, en l'an 648 par Hiouen-Thsang, et du Chinois en Francais par M. Stanislas Julien. Paris. Vol. I. 1857, Vol. II. 1858.

Samuel Beal: Si-yu-ki (Buddhist Records of the Western World) 2 vols. London. 1884.

The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang by the Shaman Hwui Li. London. 1911.

Thomas Watters: On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India. London. Vol. I. 1904. Vol. II. 1905.

APPENDIX II

LIST OF PÀLA INSCRIPTIONS

MAJUMDAR, R.C.: History of Bengal, Vol. I
Dacca. 1943. pages 173-175

Dharmapāla

1. Year 26 - Bodh-gaya Ins. JASB. N.S. IV. 101
GL. 29
2. Year 32 - Khalimpur CP. EJ. IV. 243. GL. 9
3. . . . - Nalanda CP. EI. XXIII. 290

Devapāla

4. Year 9 - Kurkihar Image Ins.
JBORS. XXVI. 251
5. Year 25 - Hilsa Image Ins. JBORS. X. 33
IA. 1928, p. 153. JRASBL. IV. 390
6. Year 33 - Monghyr CP. EI. XVIII. 304
GL. 33.
7. Year 39 - Nalanda CP. EI. XVII. 318
or 35 Monography No. 1 of VRS
JRASBL. VII. 215
8. . . . - Ghoshrawa stone Ins.
IA. XVII. 307. GL. 45
9. Year 3 - Metal image Ins. ASI. 1927-28 p. 139

Vigrahapāla I
or
Surapāla I

10. Year 3 - Two identical Bihar Buddha image Ins.
JASB. NS. IV. 108; PB. 57.
JRASBL. IV. 390 (date)

11. Sarnatha inscription mentioning Jayapala who is perhaps the father of Vigrahapala I. ASI. 1907-8, p. 75.

Nārāyaṇapāla

12. Year 7 - Gaya Temple Ins. PB.60

13. Year 9 - Indian Museum Stone Ins. PB. 61-62

14. Year 17 - Bhagalpur CP. IA. XV. 304. GL. 55.

15. Year 54 - Bihar image Ins. IA. XLVII. 110 SPP. 1328 (B.S.) p. 169

16. Badal Pillar Ins. EI. II 160. GL. 70

Rājyapāla

17. Year 24 - Nalanda pillar Ins. IA.XLVII. 111

18. Year 28 - Kurkihar image Ins. JBORS. XXVI. 246

19. Year 31 - Kurkihar image Ins. Ibid. p. 250

20. Year 32 (31 ?) - Kurkihar image Ins. Ibid. p. 247

21. Year 32 - Kurkihar image Ins. Ibid. p. 248

Gopāla II

22. Year 1 - Nalanda image Ins. JASB. NS. IV. 105. GL. 86.

23. Year 6 - Jajilpara CP. 'Bharatavarsa' 1344 (B.S.) pp. I p. 264

24. . . . - Bodhgaya Buddha image Ins. JASB. N.S. IV. 105. GL. 88.

Vigrahapāla II (or III)

25. Year 3 (2?) - Kurkihar image Ins. JBORS. XXVI. 37, 240

26. Year 8 - Terracotta Ins. Ibid. 37

27. Year 19 - Kurkihar image ins. Ibid. 36, 239

28, Year 19 - Kurkihar Image Ins. Ibid. 37, 240

Mahīpāla I

29. (v.s) 1083 - Sarnath Ins. IA. XIV. 139
ASI. 1903-4 p. 222
JASB. 1906. p. 445. GL. 104

30. Year 3 - Baghaura image Ins. EI. XVII. 355

31. Year 9 - Bangarh CP
JASB. LXI. 77
EI. XIV. 324. GL. 91

32. Year 11 - Nalanda Stone Ins.
JASB. NS. IV. 106. GL. 101.

33. Year 11 - Bodhgaya Image Ins. PB. 75

34. Year 31 - Kurkihar Image Ins. JBORS. XXVI. 245
(probably 21)

35. Year 48 - Two identical Imadpur Image Ins.
IA. XIV. 165 (f.n. 17)
JRASBL. VII. 218

35A. On a colossal statue of the ascetic Buddha at Titarawa or Tetrawan is an ins. of three lines. Only the name Mahipala has been read. ASCI. 139; III. 123 No. 11

Nayapāla

36. Year 15 - Gaya Narasinha Temple Ins. PB. 78

37. Year 15 - Gaya Krsnadranika Temple Ins.
JASB. LXIX. 190. GL. 110

Vigrahapāla III

38. Year 5 - Gaya Aksayavata Temple Ins.
PB. 81.

39. Year 12 - Amgachi CP. EI. XV. 293
GL. 121. The date was formerly read as 13. cf. PB. 80

40. Year 13 - Bihar Buddha image Ins. PB. 112

Rāmapāla

41. Year 3 - Tetrawan Image Ins.
JASB. NS. IV. 109; PB. 93
for correction of date cf. JASBL. IV. 390.

42. Year 42 - Chandiman Image Ins. PB. 93-94.

Gopàla II

43. Nimdighi (Manda) Ins. SPP. XIX. 155
PB. 102. IHQ. XVII. 207.

44. Year 14 - Rajibpur Image Ins.
(?) IHQ. XVII. 217
ASI. 1936-37. pp. 130-33
JRASBL. VII. 216

Madanapāla

45. Year 3 - Bihar Hill Image Ins.
ASC. III. 124. No. 16

46. Year 8 - Manahali CP.
JASB. LXX. Pt. I. p. 68
GL. 147

47. Year 14 - Jayanagar Image Ins.
ASC. III. 125. The date is usually read as 19, but cf. JRASBL. VII. 216.

Miscellaneous Inscriptions

48. Dinajpur (Bangarh) Pillar Ins. of Kunjaraghatavarsa.
JASB. NS. VII. 619. PB. 68

49. Irda CP. of Kamboja King Nayapala
Year 13. EI. XXII. 150; XXIV. 43.

50. Kamauli CP. of Vaidyadeva (mentions kumarapala)
Year 4. EI. II. 350. GL. 127.

51. Gaya Gadadhara Image Ins. of Paritosa
PB. 82-83

52. Gaya Silala TempleIns. of Yaksapala
IA. XVI. 64 ff. PB.96

Inscriptions of the Pratīhāra King Mahendrapāla found in Bihar and Bengal

53. Year 2 - British Museum Ins. PB. 64

54. Year 4 - Bihar Buddha Image Ins.
ASI. 1923-24. p. 102

55. Year 5 - Paharpur pillar Ins.
Diksita-excavations at Paharpur'
Memoir ASI. No. 55. p. 75

56. Year 8 - Ramgaya Dasavatar Ins. PB 64

57. Year 9 - British Museum Ins. PB. 64
Plate XXXI.

58. Year 9 - Gunariya Ins. PB. 64
JASB. XVI. 278. Plate V.

59. Year 19 - Bihar Ins. (now missing)
(?) Pb. 64.

APPENDIX III

List of officials mentioned in the land-grants of Pala kings (1)

1. Abhitvaramāna

2. Amātya - Probably a general designation of a class of high officials.

3. Aṅgarakṣa - Probably the head of the Royal body-guard (2)

4. Balādhyakṣa - Officer in chage of infantry.

"In the Khalimpur copper-plate we have the compound 'hastyaśva-go-mahiṣy-ajā-vikādhyaksa' as well as 'balā-dhyakṣa' and 'naṅkādhyakṣa' (evidently a mistake for 'nāvādhyakṣa' or 'naukādhyaksa'). In Nālandā copper-plate of Dharmapāla we have 'hastyaśva-oṣṭra-bala-vyāpṛtaka' as well as 'kiśora-vaḍavā-go-mahiṣyadhikṛta'. The Monghyr copper-plate of Devapāla has hastyaśvoṣṭrabalavyāpṛtaka' and 'kiśora-vaḍavā-go-mahiṣyajāvikādhyakṣa'. With the addition of 'nan' before 'bala' in the first, these two expressions become stereotyped in the later Pāla grants. It is obvious that we have to deal with two sets of officers, referrned to respectively as 'vyāpṛtaka' and either 'adhikṛta' or 'adhyakṣa'. The use of the words 'nan' and 'bala' indicates the military character of the former. 'Adhyakṣa' should then be taken in the sense of a superintendent in the civil administration." (3)

---

(1) History of Bengal, Vol. I. Dacca 1943. pp. 285-87

(2) Ibid. p. 277

(3) Ibid. p. 277

5. Bhogapati - an officer who probably collected the tax known as 'bhoga' (1)

6. Cauroddharaṇika - a high police official

7. Daṇḍapāśika - formed from the compound of 'daṇḍa' (punishment) and 'pāśa' (arrest or confinement). The meaning is not clear. But it might either be a keeper of the prison or a police officer appointed for arresting criminals.

8. Daṇḍaśakti - probably a magistrate.

9. Dāṇḍika - probably an executive officer.

10. Daśagrāmika - a head over ten villages.

11. Daśāparādhika - probably an officer who collected fines for ten specified kinds of criminal offences.

12. Daśśādhaśādhanika - officer to keep watch over criminal tribes.

13. Dūta - ambassador.

14. Dūta-praiṣaṇika - This is written as one name, but it may be really names of two officials, 'dūta' and 'praiṣaṇika'. As a compound word it literally means 'one who sends out a messenger'.

15. Gāmāgamika - officer in charge of migration of people.

16. Gaulmika - probably an officer in charge of a military squadron called 'gulma', consisting of 9 elephants, 9 chariots, 27 horses and 45 foot-soldier. 'Gulma', however, also means a wood, fort and a police-station. Dr. Fleet translates 'gaulmika' as 'superintendent of woods and forests' (CII. III 52. f.n.4). Dr. V.N. Ghoshal takes 'gaulmika' as collector of customs duties and refers to 'gulmadeya', used in the 'Arthaśāstra' in the sense of 'dues paid at the military or police station.'

---

(1) Ibid. p. 278

17. Grāmapati - headman of a village.

18. Jyeṣṭhakāyastha - head clerk

19. Khaṇḍarakṣa - The 'Ardha-Māgadhī Dictionary' translates it as 'customs-inspector or Superintendent of Police'.

20. Khola - spy (according to 'Ardha-Māgadhī Dictionary', on the authority of 'Piṇḍaniryukti' attributed to Bhadrabāhu).

21. Koṭṭapāla - officer in charge of forts.

22. Kṣetrapa - probably an officer in charge of lands under cultivation.

23. Kumārāmātya - District officer; also the general name of a class of officials some of whom were directly under the king or the crown-prince.

24. Mahādaṇḍanāyaka - Chief Judge, General or Magistrate.

25. Mahādaṃssādhasādhanika - the Chief Officer in the charge of criminal tribes.

26. Mahākartākṛtika - Chief Officer in charge of 'law and order'. The term is derived from 'kṛtakṛta' (acts of commission and omission).

27. Mahākṣapaṭalika - officer in charge of accounts and records.

28. Mahākumārāmatya - higher class of Kumārāmātya.

29. Mahāpratīhāra - Pratīhāra means a door-keeper. Mahāpratīhāra was evidently a high official in the police or military department. The title is applied to both military and civil administrative officers and feudatories.

30. Mahāsāndhivigrahika - Minister in charge of peace and war.

31. Mahāsenāpati - Commander-in-chief.

32. Naṃkādhyakṣa - superintendent of ships.

33. Pramātṛ - an officer in charge of land-survey.

34. Prāntapāla - Warden of Marches.

35. Rājāmātya - Amātya generally denotes high officials of state. As this name occurs immediately after Rājaputra, it has been taken by some as denoting a high minister of state, probably the Prime Minister.

36. Rājasthānīya - Regent or Viceroy.

37. Śarabhaṅga -

38. Śaulkika - collector of tolls and customs.

39. Senāpati - commander of the army.

40. Ṣaṣṭhādhikṛta - an officer who collected one sixth of goods and articles for the king's treasury.

41. Tadāyuktaka - a district officer.

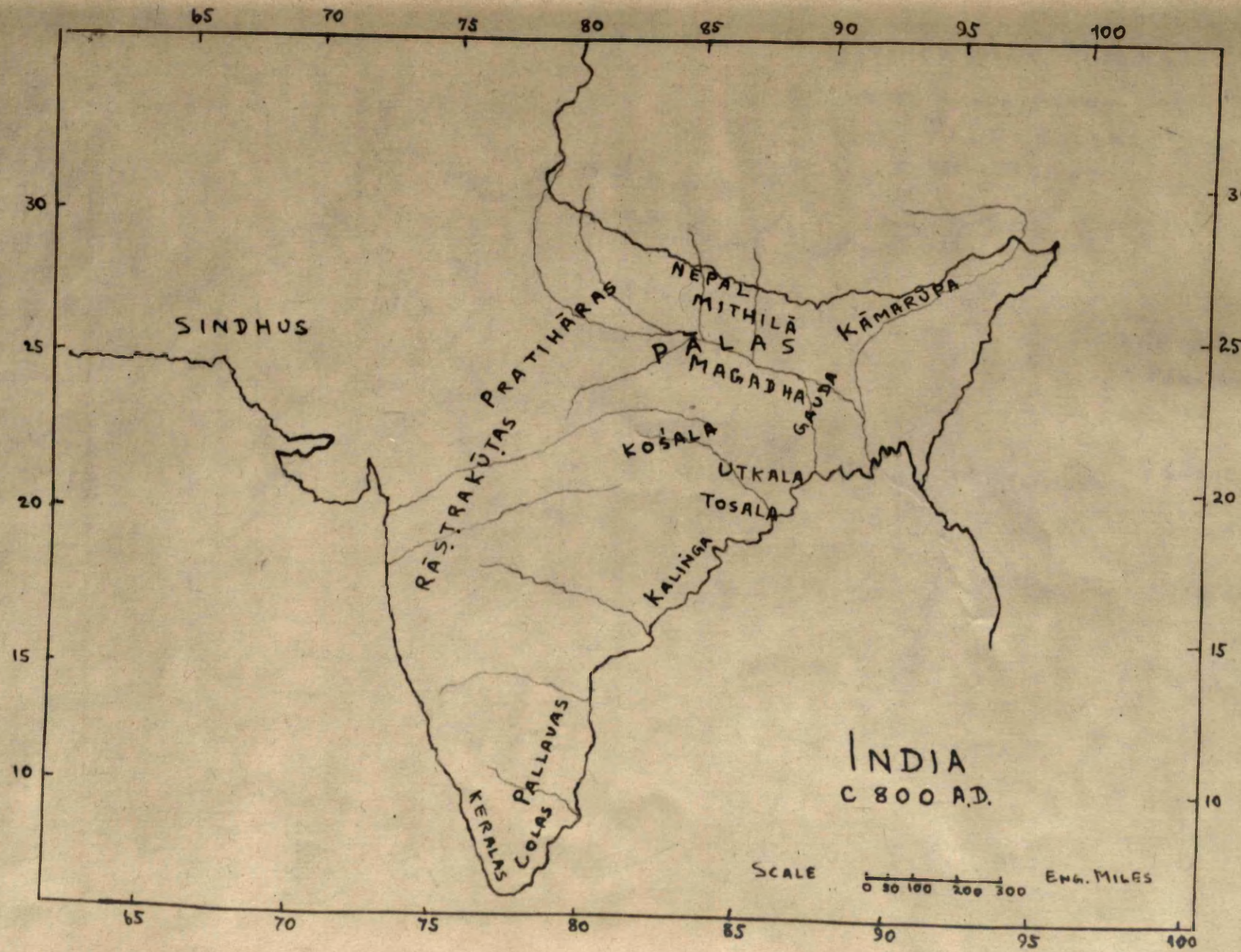
42. Tarapati - supervisor of ferries.

43. Tarika - collector of ferry dues.

44. Uparika - provincial governor.

45. Viniyuktaka -

46. Viṣayapati - a district officer.


65
70
75
80
85
90
95
100
30
25
20
15
10
SINDHUS
PRATIHĀRAS
RĀṢṬRAKŪṬAS
NEPAL
MITHILĀ
PĀLAS
KĀMARŪPA
MAGADHA
GAUḌA
KOŚALA
UTKALA
TOSALA
KALIṄGA
PALLAVAS
COLAS
KERALAS
INDIA
C 800 A.D.
SCALE
0 30 100 200 300
ENG. MILES

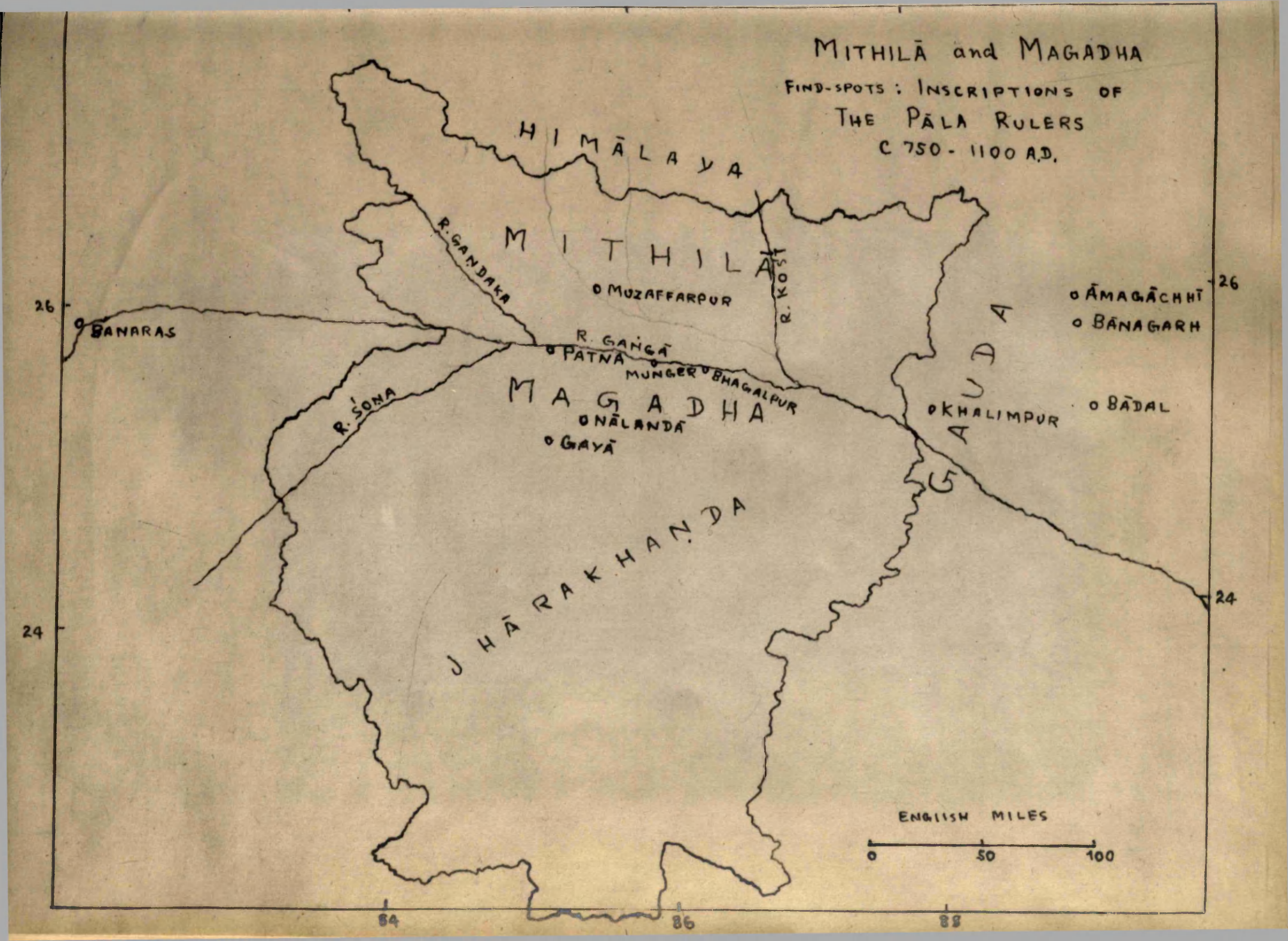

MITHILĀ and MAGADHA
FIND-SPOTS : INSCRIPTIONS OF
THE PĀLA RULERS
C 750 - 1100 A.D.
HIMĀLAYA
MITHILĀ
R. GANDAKA
R. KOSI
MUZAFFARPUR
BANARAS
R. GANGĀ
PATNA
MUNGER
BHAGALPUR
MAGADHA
R. SONA
NĀLANDĀ
GAYĀ
JHĀRAKHAND
GAUDA
ĀMAGĀCHHĪ
BĀNAGARH
KHALIMPUR
BĀDAL
ENGLISH MILES
0
50
100
26
24
84
86
88

Plate III

Viṣnu

schist

Eksari (Saran)

Size: 4'

Plate III

Plate IV

Nṛsinha

schist

Eksari (Saran)

Size: 5" x 4½"

Plate IV

Plate V

Vāmana

Eksari (Saran)

Size: 5½"

Plate V

Plate VI

Varāha

schist

Bihar

Size: 1' 4½"

Plate VI

Plate VII

Durgā mahiṣamardinī

sandstone

Benares

size: 2' 4" x 1' 4"

Plate VII

Plate VIII

Cāmuṇḍā

schist

munger

size: 2' 2"

Plate VIII

Plate IX

Kuvera

bronze

Nālandā

Size: 9"

Plate IX

Plate X

Umā-maheśvara

bronze

Kurkihar (Gaya)

size: 7"

Plate X

Plate XI

Buddha

bronze

Nālandā

size: 13½"

Plate XI

Plate XII

Buddha

bronze

Kurkihar (Gaya)

size: $8\frac{3}{4}$"

Plate XII

Plate XIII

Avalokitesvara

basalt

Visnupur (Gaya)

size: 3' 8" (height)

Plate XIII

Plate XIV

Avalokiteśvara

bronze

Kurkihar (Gaya)

size: 10"

Plate XIV

Plate XV

Maitreya

schist

Visnupur (Gaya)

size: 3' 10"

Plate XV

Neg. No. 904
Brit. No. 1682

Plate XVI

Mañjuśrī

bronze

Kurkihar (Gaya)

size: 4"

Plate XVI

Plate XVII

Tārā

bronze

Nālandā

size: 5½" (height)

Plate XVII

Plate XVIII

Śyāmatārā

bronze

Kurkihar (Gaya)

size: 11¾"

Plate XVIII

Neg No. 604
Acc. No. 9795

Plate XIX

Prājñāpāramitā

bronze

Nālandā

sinze: 8" (height)

Plate XIX

Plate XX

Padmapāṇi

sandstone

Bihar

size: 4' (height)

Plate XX

Plate XXI

Jambhala

schist

Bihar

size: 1' 5"

Plate XXI

Plate XXII

Mārīcī

stone (inscribed)

Nālandā

size: 9½"

Plate XXII

Plate XXIV

Mithuna

schist

Belwa (Saran)

size: 6½"

Plate XXIV